

Living in the Enduring 2015 “Refugee Crisis”: The Perspectives of Lesbos’ Local Populations

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Thesis Abstract

In this thesis I focus on the ongoing consequences of the 2015 “refugee crisis” for the local populations of the Greek island of Lesbos, whose voices have been overlooked by various intervening state and non-state actors. A key contribution of this work is its focus on the voices and concerns of local populations, which offers a new analytical lens for exploring the refugee crisis. Drawing on a qualitative, field-based research on Lesbos I explore why and how a phenomenon that was initially framed as a crisis and a temporary emergency became enduring and mundane. I also examine how this protracted and exceptional situation affected locals’ everyday lives by amplifying pre-existing problems related to the Greek financial crisis. In considering the various actors that have intervened on Lesbos, I explore their roles and interactions with locals in order to understand how these relationships play out on the ground. By using the perspective of locals, I am seeking to shed more light on the impact of certain interventions. In that respect, I explore how the endurance of the state of emergency impacted regular democratic procedures on Lesbos as well as Greek state sovereignty.

I found that, first, the impact of the refugee crisis needs to be analysed in conjunction with the lasting effects of the financial crisis. This “crisis within a crisis” created a suffocating environment for locals, with various economic, social, psychological, and environmental implications. Second, I found that the various interventions and exceptional policies on Lesbos have become normalised. Lesbos has become an exceptional space where the rule of law is systematically violated in the name of crisis, emergency, humanitarianism and security. Local populations, in turn, have found themselves being abandoned by law, because the border regime policies are devoid of democratic legitimacy and public contest. Third, various intervening actors contributed to enabling exceptional policies on the ground. Humanitarian actors’ dependence on donor funding has made them align with certain interests and agendas. This frequently resulted in silencing injustices that the EU border policies produce and gave space for exceptional political agendas to be embedded locally. Finally, I found that the “state of exception” in Greece and Lesbos during the past 10 years has resulted in the escalation of an already established “crypto-colonial” context, which expresses itself in overt ways, with political, economic and discursive components.

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Contents

Thesis Abstract.....	1
Acknowledgements.....	2
List of Tables and Figures.....	7
Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	8
<i>Introduction: The refugee crisis and the voices of local populations</i>	10
1. A permanent emergency?	11
2. The silencing of locals' voices.....	16
3. Theoretical framework.....	19
4. Structure of the thesis.....	22
<i>Chapter 1: Methods and methodological approaches</i>	25
Introduction.....	25
1. Research context	25
1.2 The population of interest	26
1.2.1 Who is local?.....	27
1.2.2 The multiple international actors	30
1.2.3 The Greek state	31
2. The research approach	31
3. Research process	33
3.1 Negotiating access.....	33
3.2 Entering and staying in the field	35
3.3 Leaving the field	36
4. Research tools and techniques	37
4.1 Qualitative interviews	37
4.2 Non-participant observation.....	39
4.3 The analysis of documentary sources	43
5. Data analysis	44
6. Problems and barriers	47
6.1 Positionality	47
6.2 An over-researched location	49
7. Ethical considerations	51
7.1 Harm or risk to participants.....	51
7.2 Informed consent.....	52
7.3 Confidentiality and anonymity.....	53
7.4 Risks for the researcher	54
Conclusion	56
<i>Chapter 2: A “crisis within a crisis”</i>	58
Introduction.....	58

1. The notion of “crisis”	60
2. The Greek “crises”	63
2.1 The “financial crisis”	64
2.2 The “refugee crisis”: An unforeseen and unpreventable event?	66
2.3. The Greek crises as a “shock within a shock”	68
3. A “crisis within a crisis”: Locals’ responses	69
3.1 The VAT discount and the “objectification” of refugees	71
3.2 Local populations’ psychological wellbeing	72
3.3 Delinquency as a result of border policies and locals’ responses	74
3.4 Racism, xenophobia and social cohesion	75
3.5 The environmental degradation of Lesbos	80
3.6 Local unemployed people and “local” refugees	82
3.7 Local civil society	85
3.8 Local authorities and public services	88
3.9 Private sector and local businesses	90
Conclusion	93
Chapter 3: The “border regime” as a “state of exception”	96
Introduction	96
1. The “state of exception”	96
1.1 Can “bare lives” have agency?	99
1.2 Degrees of abandonment by law	102
2. The “state of exception” on Lesbos	103
2.1. A “state of exception” in the name of security and the “politics of fear”	106
3. The EU “border regime” as a “state of exception”	109
3.1 The externalisation of the EU borders	109
3.2 The internalisation of the EU borders	112
3.3 The EU-Turkey Statement	116
3.3.1 The legal nature of the Statement	117
3.3.2 The designation of Turkey as a safe country	120
3.4 The “geographical restriction rule” and its lawfulness	123
Conclusion	125
Chapter 4: The humanitarian and security actors enabling the “border regime”	127
Introduction	127
1. The humanitarian actors on Lesbos and the principles of humanitarianism	128
1.1 The demonisation and criminalisation of NGOs	133
1.2 Funding dependence and the establishment of an intermediaries’ regime	135
1.3 Silencing the injustices generated by the border regime policies	142
1.4 Enabling the border regime through the “NGOisation” of resistance	145
2. The security actors enabling the border regime	153

Conclusion	158
Chapter 5: Colonialism in Greece and Lesbos?	161
Introduction.....	161
1. The “state of exception” and its relation to colonialism	162
2. From crypto-colonialism to post-colonialism	163
2.1 Moving beyond crypto-colonialism	165
2.2 The Greek state, its ‘internal elites’ and local populations	170
3. Post-colonialism and the Greek State	171
3.1 Democratic legitimacy and coercion.....	172
3.2 The intervening actors and the Greek state	175
3.3 The capitulation of the Greek state	182
4. Lesbos as a post-colony within a post-colony	184
4.1 The partnerships and interactions between international actors and local populations	186
4.1.1 Local authorities.....	189
4.1.2 Local civil society	192
4.2 Locals’ values and practices.....	197
4.3 Colonising the locale: Lesbos as a humanitarian and militarised zone.....	199
Conclusion	204
Conclusion	207
Introduction.....	207
1. Key research findings	210
1.1 The consequences of the enduring crises	210
1.2 States of exception and permanent emergencies.....	211
1.3 The intervening actors’ dependence on funding	212
1.4 An escalation of post-colonial features	212
2. Contribution to Knowledge.....	214
3. Further observations and future directions of research	215
3.1 Lesbos as the “laboratory of Europe”	216
3.2 Geopolitics and political dependence	218
3.3 A state of emergency in the name of national security and public health.....	219
3.4. The need for comparative research	221
4. Structural changes and collective agency	222
Appendices.....	225
Appendix 1: Invitation letters to participants.....	225
International Organisations	225
Lesbos’ local populations (Greek translation)	226
Appendix 2: Information sheets.....	227
International Organisations	227

Lesvos' local populations (including Greek translation).....	228
Appendix 3: Publicity leaflets (including Greek translation)	230
Appendix 4: Consent forms (including Greek translation).....	232
References	234

List of Tables and Figures

Figures

Figure 1: Map of Greece and Lesbos	25
Figure 2: The route from Mytilene to the main refugee camps	42
Figure 3: Sources	45
Figure 4: Thematic coding	46

Tables

Table 1: Type and number of research participants	38
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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AI	Amnesty International
CJEU	The Court of Justice of the European Union
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EC	European Commission
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
EUROJUST	European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit
EUROPOL	European Union's law Enforcement Agency
FRONTEX	European Union Borders and Coast Guard Agency
GC	General Court of the European Union
GCR	Greek Council for Refugees
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HWR	Human Rights Watch
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IO	International Organisation
IOM	International Organisation of Migration
MsF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
SAR	Search and Rescue
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UN	United Nations

UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF

United Nations Children's Fund

Introduction: The refugee crisis and the voices of local populations

In 2015, after almost ten years of activist and professional engagement with refugees arriving in Greece, I witnessed the large increases in border crossers arriving to Europe through some of the Greek Aegean islands. Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Kos and Leros have been at the forefront of this so-called “refugee crisis”¹ with over one million people arriving within a period of a few months (Reliefweb, 2017). More than half of these refugees² reached Europe through the island of Lesvos, where I was born, raised and had worked. As an activist and lawyer providing legal aid to refugees – on the Greek mainland and the Aegean islands including Lesvos – my initial concern was to focus on refugees’ human rights, reception and settlement. At the same time, as a local from Lesvos and member of local initiatives I also felt worried about the implications that the refugee crisis could have on Lesvos’ local populations³, who were already affected by the Greek “financial crisis” that started in 2010. This “crisis” was characterised by the enforcement of exceptional reforms and austerity measures, which led to unemployment and destitution, loss of income and property for the Greek people, as well as a humanitarian crisis (Matsaganis, 2012, 2013; Kalantzis, 2016). As a result, many locals were already arguing that the reception of refugees was an additional source of distress to the financial crisis’ consequences.

The above concerns gradually amplified in the next months and years. Due to the enforcement of a series of exceptional border policies and interventions by the EU as well as state and non-state actors, locals witnessed their island being transformed into an open prison for thousands of refugees. They also felt that their voices⁴ were overlooked not only by the intervening actors but frequently also by the Greek state. Most importantly, the routinisation and normalisation of the refugee crisis and the exceptional policies and interventions characterising this crisis caused even more frustration and discomfort to locals.

By focusing on the island of Lesvos as a case study, a first aim of this thesis is to explore

¹ I am referring to a “so-called refugee crisis”, because figuring the situation as a “crisis” can be a device for the authorisation of emergency and exceptional measures, see: (De Genova, 2016) and chapter 2.

² I am using the terms “border crossers” and “refugees” interchangeably. These two terms were widely used by members of solidarity networks while I was living on Lesvos before 2015. During my fieldwork I noticed that activists, volunteers and many members of NGOs were still using these terms and in order to reflect the language used on the ground, I decided to adopt these in my thesis.

³ In chapter 1, I explore the question of ‘who counts as a local’ in this thesis.

⁴ Locals’ voices in this thesis include their lived experiences that is, their perspectives, arguments, objections, and understanding of the effects and consequences of various border policies and interventions on Lesvos. Also see section 3 of this chapter.

why and how a phenomenon that was initially framed as a crisis⁵ and a temporary emergency became enduring and mundane. A second aim is to explore how this protracted situation affected locals' everyday lives. Furthermore, I wanted to explore why and how policy makers and most of the intervening actors on Lesbos did not pay adequate attention to the voices and concerns of locals on Lesbos. I decided to give voice to locals themselves by doing a detailed analysis on how Lesbos' local community is affected by various interventions and border policies. Thus, a third aim of this thesis is to explore the interactions between locals and the various intervening actors and to understand how these relationships play out on the ground. By using the perspective of local populations, whose voices and views have not been heard, I am seeking to shed more light on the impact of certain international and national interventions on their everyday lives and understand the nuances of different scales of governance and how different levels (international, national, local) interact.

1. A permanent emergency?

In order to be more specific and contextualise the research presented in this thesis, it is relevant to sketch out the main developments characterising the refugee crisis and its aftermath. This will shed more light on how a temporary emergency in the name of the refugee crisis during 2015 developed into a permanent emergency and dramatically changed the everyday lives of local populations. I suggest the following three main intersecting phases of the refugee crisis developing over the last five years:

The first phase of the refugee crisis lasted from early 2015 until August 2015. This period is characterised by the increase of refugee arrivals, the lack of coordination by the Greek state and the efforts by locals and a few humanitarian actors to deal with the situation. The political and financial situation after six years of austerity measures, in combination with the increased refugee arrivals, were important factors that limited the Greek state's ability to react effectively. As a result, the Greek government and the EU invoked the "responsibility to protect", a notion introduced by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (2001). This notion suggests that sovereign states have a responsibility to protect their own citizens from avoidable catastrophes, but when they are unwilling or unable to do so, that responsibility must be borne by the broader community of states (Ibid.). To that end, in August 2015, the Greek Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras, asked for external help. He stated that Greece is Europe's border and that the problem "surpasses" Greece's abilities,

⁵ In chapter 2, titled "A crisis within a crisis", I explain how I am engaging with the term "crisis".

because the country's economic problems meant it was facing a "humanitarian crisis within a crisis" (BBC, 2015b). Similarly, the UN protection chief Volker Türk recognised that "the rhetoric on responsibility sharing for refugees needs to be put into practice" (UNHCR, 2017b), since the main burden has been largely transposed to the borders of the EU.

This "responsibility to protect" was translated into a huge humanitarian response, which started after August 2015. This second phase lasted until March 2016 and was mainly characterised by an emergency humanitarian and security intervention on islands like Lesbos. As Evthymios Papataxiarchis (2016, p. 6) phrases it, "the camps – often administered by NGO personnel – and the presence of Frontex are strong indices of the limited powers of the state and municipal authorities, who maintain for themselves a rather symbolic role in the context". Similarly, Marie Gillespie (2018) notes that the inadequacies and lack of state provision is a demonstration that the Greek state is handing over a major part of its duty of care to NGOs and citizens. According to Daniel Howden and Apostolos Fotiadis (2017):

A sequence of events beginning with the record number of people who flowed into Greece in June 2015 and culminating in the photograph of drowned Syrian toddler Alan Kurdi woke the world to the refugee crisis. The effect of that awakening was to tip the entire humanitarian complex toward Greece, sending resources tumbling out of the developing world into the European Union. It prompted an unprecedented number of international volunteers to descend on the country, the UN refugee agency to declare an emergency inside the European Union, and the EU to deploy its own humanitarian response unit inside Europe for the first time.

The invocation of emotion played a crucial role in legitimising this humanitarian intervention. As Perl and Strasser argue (2018, p. 507) the representation of Alan Kurdi's photograph by the mass media "provoked a global moral outcry". Fassin and Pandolfi (2010, p. 12) observed that contemporary interventionism is legitimised in terms of a moral obligation, in the name of humanitarian morality, rather than a political principle and that this specific justification is becoming normalised. In addition, as Craig Calhoun (2010, p. 54) notes, the idea of emergency is closely related to the notion of humanitarianism focusing on an immediate response suggested by the emergency imaginary, with its emphasis on

sudden, unpredictable, and short-term explosions of people's suffering. The intervention on Lesbos was also initiated and justified by the invocation of an exceptional situation requiring an emergency response. The UNHCR classified the situation in Greece as an emergency (Clayton, Holland and Gaynor, 2015), while the European Commission (EC), the EU's executive body, started allocating funding, which was mainly channelled to UN agencies and NGOs. According to the EC (2018), this mechanism is triggered in urgent and exceptional circumstances, and the EC can fund emergency humanitarian support for people in need within the European Union.

The intervening actors on Lesbos consisted of different institutions, agencies, organisations and people trying to manage, assist and control refugees. Apart from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), hundreds of international volunteers, journalists, numerous celebrities and higher church representatives visited Lesbos, in order to highlight the urgent need for humanitarian support (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2016; The National Herald, 2016). After the second half of 2015 "a world of camps" (Skleparis & Armakolas, 2016, p. 176) took shape on Lesbos with various agents interacting and operating simultaneously. Although International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) were and continue to be the main intervening actors, other actors that are central to the refugee response on Lesbos are the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, also known as Frontex, NATO and Europol. Critically investigating the actions of these actors is important for this thesis, because as I argue in chapter 4 the enforcement of various border policies relies on the intervention, settlement and collaboration of these actors who shape and enable border policies.

During the first two phases of the refugee crisis border crossers arriving on the Greek islands were mostly transient, with arrivals remaining on the islands for a limited time (Reliefweb, 2017). However, this situation changed after March 2016, in the aftermath of the EU-Turkey Statement and the geographical restriction of refugees' movement on Lesbos (see below). Even though refugee arrivals significantly decreased, border crossers were stuck for prolonged periods of time on Lesbos, while the number of arrivals on the island was greater than the number of departures. So, the third and final phase of the refugee crisis is characterised by a decrease in refugee arrivals but also the transformation of Lesbos into an open prison for the thousands of refugees stranded there, and the semi-permanent settlement of various intervening actors on Lesbos to manage the refugees. This new reality on Lesbos

was a result of the enforcement of specific border policies being recognised as exceptional. In September 2015 the European Council referred to the implications of “the exceptional migratory flows to migration management” (European Commission, 2015) and the head of the UN refugee agency denoted that “exceptional circumstances require an exceptional response. Business as usual will not solve the problem” (cited in: Clayton, 2015).

As a result, several exceptional responses and policies were gradually introduced both by the EU and the Greek state, which as I argue in this thesis violate the rule of law in terms of legitimisation and democratic accountability. Four responses are of particular concern. First, the “hotspot approach”, according to which a hotspot is “an area at the EU’s external border which faces disproportionate migratory pressure” (European Commission, 2015). This approach is a tool that allows the EU and Greece to declare whole regions, or even entire nation-states, under a state of emergency (Vradis et al., 2019, pp. 20–21). Second, the 2016 closure of the so-called “Balkan route” – a path which was used by border crossers to travel from Greece to more prosperous EU countries – forced thousands of refugees to remain stranded in Greece (Human Rights Watch, 2016). Third, the implementation of the Joint EU-Turkey Statement of 18 March 2016 (Council of the European Union, 2016), aiming to end migration and human smuggling from Turkey to the EU, by recognising Turkey as a “safe third country”. It mainly involves sending back to Turkey irregular migrants arriving to the Greek islands after March 20, 2016. Even though hotspots on the Aegean islands were designed as detention centres, the initially applied detention scheme was replaced after the EU-Turkey Statement by the so-called “geographical restriction” limiting refugees’ freedom of movement to the respective island (Ziebritzki and Nestler, 2018) and thus turning islands like Lesbos into open prisons.

Almost five years after the beginning of the refugee crisis the above-mentioned interventions and exceptional policies are still in effect and have become normalised and routinised, with locals watching their small island turned into an open prison. Subsequently, refugees on the “prison island”, as refugees often call Lesbos, are finding themselves in a situation that is approaching a protracted refugee situation. The UNHCR (2004, p. 1) defines a protracted refugee situation as:

One in which refugees find themselves in a long-standing and intractable state of limbo. Their lives may not be at risk, but their

basic rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years of exile. A refugee in this situation is often unable to break free from enforced reliance on external assistance.

Refugees' fundamental human rights and their socioeconomic existence are certainly threatened on Lesbos, where they remain trapped for prolonged periods of time (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2018a; Iliadou, 2019b). However, this is not the only precondition for a refugee situation to be characterised as protracted. The UNHCR (2004, p. 2) also clarifies that there needs to be a population over 25,000, who lives in exile for more than five years, in order to argue that this population is in a protracted refugee situation. The official number of stranded refugees on Lesbos was around 12,000 during autumn 2018, when I carried out my fieldwork, and in Greece as a whole it approached 75,000 (InfoMigrants, 2018), with the number gradually increasing. A year later there were more than 89,000 refugees stranded in Greece and more than 20,000 refugees stranded on Lesbos (Avraam, 2019; Zervas and Dimopoulou, 2019). At the time of writing, the duration of this situation had reached the fifth year and in UNHCR's terms it qualifies as a "protracted" refugee situation with no signs of change so far. Therefore, the situation can no longer be described as temporary, but rather as a permanent one.

In February 2017, it was announced that the Greek state would assume greater responsibilities and take over services that (I)NGOs and the UNHCR had been providing (Trafford, 2017). The spokesperson from the UNHCR on Lesbos told me during our interview that this was done in an attempt to move the situation from an emergency response to a sustainable system and that the emergency status of Greece has been discontinued. Moreover, the EU stressed that the "migration crisis" is over with the vice-president of the EC, Frans Timmermans stating that, "Europe is no longer experiencing the migration crisis we lived in 2015, but structural problems remain" (European Commission, 2019b). So, the European Commission, the Greek state and the UNHCR no longer framed the situation as a crisis requiring an urgent response. Therefore, the period after February 2017 signalled what I frame in this thesis as the "aftermath of the refugee crisis". However, my own understanding concerning the aftermath of the refugee crisis is different from the understanding of the Greek state, the EC and the UNHCR. During autumn 2018, when I was on Lesbos for my fieldwork, all of the exceptional policies I referred to above were still in force and most of the humanitarian and security actors continued to operate on the island,

playing a significant role regarding the refugee response management and coordination. Refugees, locals and the intervening actors – who frequently have conflicting interests – were still interacting with each other in order to deal with this enduring emergency, or this “critical situation”, in the UNHCR’s understanding. In the perception of many locals Lesvos became an ideal space for the EU to not only control the refugee flows and deter refugees from reaching Europe, but also to turn islands like Lesvos into “Europe’s warehouse of refugees’ souls”, or the “laboratorium of Europe”, as some of my interlocutors have called Lesvos.

As a result, while writing this thesis the exceptional situation on Lesvos had become normalised and as I will show the negative implications for locals of the various interventions and border policies are gradually getting more and more intense. To that end, the focus of this thesis is on answering the following overarching research question:

- How has the refugee crisis and its aftermath affected Lesvos’ local populations?

To answer this question, I consider three further questions:

- What are the implications of the enduring “crises” and exceptional policies for local populations’ everyday lives?
- What are the roles of the main intervening actors on Lesvos and how do locals interact with these actors?
- How has the crisis within the crisis and the endurance of the state of emergency influenced Greek state’s sovereignty as well as regular democratic procedures on Lesvos and how has this affected local populations?

2. The silencing of locals’ voices

Throughout my thesis I argue that the voices and concerns of locals were overlooked to a large extent by both Greek and EU policy makers and most of the intervening actors. As I noticed, a disregard for locals’ voices could also be traced among many of the numerous academics who conducted research on Lesvos in the past five years. Such lack of focus on locals’ voices and experiences is a symptom of the colonial relationships that part of my critique in this thesis is focusing on. As I will further discuss in chapter 5, these colonial relationships effectively silence local populations and are entrenched in the relationships of multiple external actors – including researchers – to the perspectives of locals.

In particular, although Lesvos has been an important entry point for refugees since the 1990s (Iliadou, 2019b), until 2015 the refugee issue⁶ in the region was under-researched. In the aftermath of the 2015 refugee crisis the academic literature focusing on refugees and borders turned Lesvos from an under-researched to an over-researched location (also see section 6.2 of chapter 1). Most of the existing literature examining the refugee issue in Greece and Lesvos has focused on refugees' human rights, reception, detention and criminalisation (Cabot, 2016; Fili, 2016; Hamilakis, 2017; Iliadou, 2019b); on border politics and practices (Franck, 2018; Georgoulas, 2017; Hess & Kasperek, 2017; Pallister-Wilkins, 2018; Perkowski, 2018; Pillant & Tassin, 2017; Skleparis, 2016; Triandafyllidou & Dimitriadi, 2014; Tsianos & Karakayali, 2010; Vradis et al., 2019); and on solidarity towards refugees and forms of resistance (Papataxiarchis, 2016; Tsoni, 2016; Serntedakis, 2017; Skleparis, 2017; Gillespie, 2018; Stierl, 2019). Although there is a growing body of research focusing on borders, refugees and solidarity, there is at the same time a limited empirical and analytical focus on the perspectives of local populations who are affected by various border policies and interventions. My argument is that although it is necessary and important to focus on refugees and border practices, a focus on those local populations who have lived on Lesvos for many years can help us gain a more in-depth understanding of the refugee crisis and the implications of various policies and interventions.

Moreover, the existing literature exploring the implications of the refugee crisis on Lesvos' local populations mainly concerns quantitative and documentary analysis of the impact of the refugee crisis on Lesvos' economy and the tourist industry (Pappas and Papatheodorou, 2017; Ivanov and Stavrinoudis, 2018; Panagos, Rontos and Nagopoulos, 2020), as well as on the Greek healthcare system (Kotsiou *et al.*, 2018). However, the quantitative methods being used in these studies do not provide a more holistic understanding of the effects of the refugee crisis on local populations, and do not capture the voices and lived experiences of locals. Other issues being explored concerning locals on Lesvos focus on hospitality as a cultural mode (Papataxiarchis, 2017; Rozakou, 2016;) and more recently there is a growing literature by mainly Greek researchers on the escalation of racism and xenophobia on Lesvos (Iliadou, 2019b; Fielitz, 2020; Papataxiarchis, 2020; Souzas *et al.*, 2020). These studies do not explore locals' points of view and the impact of various interventions and exceptional policies on their everyday lives.

⁶ In my thesis I frequently use the term "refugee issue", in order to broadly refer to refugee arrivals on Lesvos as an ongoing issue of concern that has emerged long before and after the so-called refugee crisis.

As the refugee crisis has affected the everyday lives of local populations (see chapter 2), it should be analysed by including and not excluding populations who are affected by this crisis. Thus, I am seeking to make a contribution to knowledge in this thesis by changing the vantage point and carrying out a detailed analysis of how local communities are affected by various border policies and interventions. In turn, notions such as “crisis”, “humanitarian intervention” and “permanent emergency” can be conceptualised differently when they are explored through the lens of locals’ perceptions and everyday lives. I am thus using the perspective of locals to shed more light on the impact of certain interventions; in order to understand the nuances of different scales of governance I explore how different levels (international, national, local) interact.

I also suggest that the silence on the local populations on Lesbos has to be understood in the context of a more general structural silence in humanitarian and development literature on various regions. As Dennis Dijkzeul and Claude Wakenge (2010) highlight, most studies on humanitarian action focus on humanitarian policy and politics, but the issue of interaction with local populations has not been equally examined. Although many studies indicate the importance of understanding local perceptions, they fail to document them (for example see: Bos, 2003, p. 25; Okumu, 2003; Frangonikolopoulos, 2005, p. 62; Minn, 2007). Yet the perceptions of locals on externally introduced policies and humanitarian action is an issue which matters because,

target populations and other local stakeholders are not just passive recipients; rather, they mediate and act. Their influence is key to understanding the legitimacy and effectiveness of a humanitarian intervention [...] and the study of local perceptions could be a cornerstone of a better understanding of the management and impact of humanitarian action. (Dijkzeul and Wakenge, 2010, p. 1140).

Emilie Buyle (2016), suggests that local perception studies can increase respect for local populations and also improve the effectiveness and accountability of the humanitarian sector. Moreover, research from various geographical contexts (Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Kyrgyzstan, Bosnia, Somalia, Zambia, and Lebanon) indicates that there is a strong tendency that humanitarian projects are imposed on local populations by external actors, that local

concerns are not adequately considered and that international humanitarian assistance depends heavily on the political agendas of the countries that provide aid (Bakewell, 2000; Gizelis and Kosek, 2005; Lee, 2008; Warah, 2008; Schetter, 2014). Even though the humanitarian intervention on Lesbos from 2015 onwards mainly focuses on refugees and border control, this intervention inevitably affects the lives of locals, whose voices and concerns must be considered.

3. Theoretical framework

In order to answer my research questions my thesis considers reflections on individual experiences as material to exploring wider structural issues like the notion of crisis, permanent emergencies, humanitarian and security interventions and post-colonialism (Minh-Ha, 1991; de Jong, 2017, p. 5). In that sense my research participants' experiences and reflections can only be understood in interaction with these structures (de Jong, 2017). This thesis thus works with the assumption that micro processes and specifically the everyday experiences and interactions of local populations on Lesbos can tell us something meaningful about developments at the macro level. As Sarah Pink (2012, p. 143) observes, the notion of the everyday is "at the centre of human existence, the essence of who we are and our location in the world". Sarah Neal and Karim Murji (2015, pp. 811–812) explain that:

Everyday life-approaches attempt to capture and recognize the mundane, the routines in (and of) social relations and practices. In doing so, they not only give importance to the ordinary, and take the ordinary seriously as a category of analysis, but they also evidence how everyday life social relations, experiences and practices are always more than simply or straightforwardly mundane, ordinary and routine. Rather, everyday life is dynamic, surprising and even enchanting; [...] Focusing on what the ordinary is involves an immersion in the seemingly unremarkable and routine relationships and interactions with others, things, contexts and environments.

Consequently, micro social life, the banal and the familiar, are co-constitutive of the wider complexities, structures and processes of historical and contemporary social worlds (Ibid. p. 812). In my thesis I situate my focus on local perspectives at the intersection of the following

theoretical approaches: Critical migration and border studies, critical humanitarianism and development literature and post-colonial theory.

In particular, critical migration and border studies mainly frame and answer my first and third sub-research questions, by providing insights on how borders function, to whose benefit these borders function, and who is affected by various border policies (see, e.g. De Genova, 2016; 2012; Tazzioli & Walters, 2016). This literature critically addresses the attempts to control and govern movements of migration, and questions the political, economic and juridical conditions that bring migration and borders into being (Bigo, 2002; Tsianos and Karakayali, 2010; Hess and Kasperek, 2017b). By drawing on this literature and taking advantage of my legal training as a lawyer specialised in international law, I critically discuss how border policies were enforced by disregarding the rule of law and the voices of the populations being affected by these policies. I pay particular attention to the strands of Giorgio Agamben's (2005) work on migration studies and the notion of the "state of exception". Agamben's work is useful in explaining how various exceptional border policies on Lesbos become enduring and violate the rule of law in terms of legitimisation and democratic accountability, side-lining the voices and concerns of local populations who frequently find themselves as being abandoned by law. As I will explain, this enduring state of exception has had profound consequences for the lives of Greek people. Since the beginning of the Greek financial crisis in 2010, Greece has been experiencing "states of exception" being characterised by the intervention of international actors as well as the enforcement of enduring exceptional policies which have produced multiple shocks for the Greek people. The "shock doctrine", is thus another relevant concept for this thesis which I interlink with Agamben's state of exception. It was developed by Naomi Klein (2007) to describe the deliberate techniques or tools used by neoliberal actors to justify the deployment of exceptional/emergency measures without provoking citizens' resistance. I will also show that the Greek crises suggest that exceptional policies could not have been enforced without discourses associated with the "politics of fear" (Keane, 2001; Robin, 2006), based on the assumption that presenting people with an alleged threat to their well-being will produce a powerful emotional response that can override reason and prevent a critical assessment of these exceptional policies. Moreover, the fact that a humanitarian intervention on Lesbos took place alongside surveillance and border control practices makes it relevant to focus on the militarisation and securitisation of locals' everyday lives. As Garelli and Tazzioli (2016) phrase it, the operation of various surveillance agencies has resulted in the militarisation of the Aegean Sea border, a process that respectively leads to an increased militarisation of

contemporary life (Diken and Laustsen, 2005, p. 92). Lesvos has not only been militarised but also securitised. Securitisation is the process of actors transforming subjects into matters of “security”, an extreme version of politicisation that enables extraordinary means to be used in the name of security (Buzan, Wæver and Wilde, 1998, p. 25). By focusing on Lesvos I will explore who securitises, on what issues, for whom, under what conditions, and with what consequences for local populations (Buzan, Wæver and Wilde, 1998, p. 25).

I also employ concepts from critical humanitarianism and development literature, which help me to answer my second research question. The fact that a humanitarian intervention took place on Lesvos made it relevant to draw on this literature, in order to understand the notion of “humanitarian intervention”, how and why it takes place, what interests it serves and what are the roles of the intervening actors. In 1965 humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality were codified as the seven “Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross” (British Red Cross, no date). However, there is considerable criticism of the above principles, as will be further discussed in this thesis. The principles of independence and neutrality, for example, are questionable, since many humanitarian agencies are dependent on government funding and governments want to use aid for foreign policy and development goals (Yanacopulos and Hanlon, 2006). The emergency funding by the European Commission directed to humanitarian actors is a characteristic example to be critically explored in this thesis (chapter 4). De Genova (2016) argues that the European border “crisis” has been depicted in depoliticising language as a “humanitarian” crisis and describing a situation as a “crisis” appears to be a device for the legitimisation of exceptional policies. As a result, the “state of exception”, that I previously referred to is interlinked with the notion of “humanitarian intervention”. Mark Duffield (2007, p. 33) suggests that, “like all states of exception” humanitarian permanent emergencies “challenge existing laws, override social constraints and question political limits” (ibid. p.34). Through the lens of locals’ perspectives, I will shed more light on the above debates.

Apart from the interests that a humanitarian intervention might serve it is also important to explore what this intervention means to local populations who interact with the intervening actors. “NGOisation” (Choudry and Kapoor, 2013, p. 1) is a concept from critical development and humanitarian literature commonly used by social movements, activist networks and academics to refer to the institutionalisation, professionalisation, depoliticisation and demobilisation of social movements. To that end I will explore to what

extent the NGOisation of resistance affects the way collective networks and solidarity operate on Lesbos. Furthermore, the concept of “do no harm” developed by Mary B. Anderson (1999) suggests that humanitarianism is an important impulse that can sometimes do more harm than good. Anderson's main point is that when international assistance is given in the context of a conflict, it becomes a part of that context and thus also of the conflict. So, an interesting aspect to explore is to what extent the intervening actors on Lesbos have become a part of the exceptional border regime on Lesbos, by practically enabling it and therefore “doing harm” to both refugees and locals.

Finally, post-colonial theory helps me to frame and answer my third sub-research question. It provides insights on why and how a humanitarian and security intervention has been taking place in Greece and Lesbos, under what terms and conditions. By considering various post-colonial features including political, economic and discursive components I explain how various interventions influence Greek sovereignty as well as regular democratic procedures on Lesbos. Specifically, in historic terms Greece has been dependent on more prosperous countries’ interventions both economically and politically, since its declaration of independence in 1821, a situation that the social anthropologist Michael Herzfeld (2002) termed in 2002 as “crypto-colonialism”. The prefix “crypto” for Herzfeld means a disguised form of colonialism (Taylor-Seymour, 2013). Even though Herzfeld’s concept was an inspiration for me in writing this thesis, my empirical findings indicate that forms of colonialism in Greece need to be re-examined and reconceptualised in the light of the most recent “crises” that started in 2010. As I will argue there is a need to deepen and enrich the concept of “crypto-colonialism” by connecting it to and embedding it within broader post-colonial literature, which has a more nuanced understanding of various post-colonial features including political, economic and discursive components (Crush, 1995; Escobar, 1995; Ferguson, 1990; also see chapter 5).

4. Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of five substantive chapters. In my first substantive chapter, titled “Methods and methodological approaches”, I start by discussing methodological issues and provide a detailed account of how I conducted my fieldwork, what methods I used and what barriers I confronted as a former local turned researcher. I also provide several reflections concerning ethics and my positionality in this research.

In the second chapter, entitled “A crisis within a crisis”, I set out “the crisis within the crisis” that Greece found itself in. In order to explore the implications of the protracted “crises” upon local populations’ everyday lives I describe the contemporary reality in Greece and Lesbos by exploring the refugee crisis as a crisis within the Greek financial crisis and as a shock within a shock (Klein, 2007). I show how these crises are interlinked, in what ways they have become enduring and how the enforcement of exceptional policies characterising these crises has had a mostly negative impact on locals’ everyday lives. I also explain in what ways the refugee crisis has become an additional source of distress for locals in the context of the financial crisis. Moreover, I explore how the enforcement of exceptional policies produces racism and xenophobia by many locals against refugees and humanitarian workers, leading to divides in the local community of Lesbos and thus challenging pre-existing forms of solidarity and social cohesion on the island.

After describing the contemporary situation in Greece and Lesbos, in chapter 3, titled “The border regime as a state of exception”, I explore how certain exceptional border policies allowed various actors to intervene and to also transform the space of Lesbos into an open prison and a securitised zone for an indefinite period of time. By considering that the notion of crisis is deeply intertwined with the notion of permanent emergency, I explore how the enduring 2015 refugee crisis can be interpreted as a “state of exception” (Agamben, 2005). I thus introduce and critically interrogate Agamben’s (2005) concept of the “state of exception” and explain how the concept applies in contemporary Greece and how I am therefore using the concept in my case study. I explain how various exceptional policies violate the rule of law in terms of legitimisation and democratic accountability, side-lining the voices and concerns of local populations, who frequently feel abandoned by law. Critically interrogating various exceptional policies also sheds light on how the endurance of the state of emergency influences the sovereignty of the Greek state.

In chapter 4, “The humanitarian and security actors enabling the border regime”, I focus on the processes and practices enacted on Lesbos, which are characterised by the intervention of multiple non-state actors. I first introduce some of the main humanitarian actors on Lesbos and I then explore these actors’ roles as well as their interactions with local populations. Through the lens of locals’ experiences, I am exploring why and how some of these actors enable and materialise enduring border regime policies on the ground, thereby reproducing a permanent emergency and a state of exception. In order to explore why this is happening I also discuss their dependence on donor funding and how the interests of donors affect their

work. I also explore how the NGOisation of resistance on Lesbos can demobilise local grassroots movements to a certain extent and thus diminish locals' resistance against the border regime's exceptional policies. Next, I focus on the security actors on Lesbos. I introduce these actors and explain how they are enabling border policies through a strengthened securitisation and militarisation of the borders and an overwhelming surveillance intervention. I also explore how this panoptical surveillance affects locals on Lesbos.

In my final substantial chapter, titled "Colonialism in Greece and Lesbos?", I explore how forms of colonialism are constructed through various kinds of intervention in Greece and Lesbos. I argue that the "state of exception" in Greece during the past 10 years has given space for an already established crypto-colonial context to escalate and express itself in various overt ways including through political, economic and discursive components. I separately explore how various forms of colonialism materialise in relation to the Greek state and then in relation to Lesbos. The logic of discussing Lesbos separately from the Greek state is to highlight that the interests and concerns of the vast majority of local populations on Lesbos are not always the same as those of the Greek state. Concerning Lesbos' local community, I focus on how various forms of colonialism are constructed through the partnerships and interactions between international actors and local authorities and local civil society. I also explore how these interactions affect locals' values and practices.

In the concluding chapter I explain how I answered my research questions. I refer to the key findings of my research and I discuss its contributions and broader implications. I also refer to potential future directions for research and to various structural changes that need to take place, in order for the everyday lives of populations affected by various exceptional policies to be improved.

Chapter 1: Methods and methodological approaches

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to set out the methodological strategies that I adopted and describe the data on which this thesis is based. In order to answer my research questions, I conducted fieldwork on the island of Lesbos by employing an in-depth qualitative approach drawing on ethnographic methods, and thematic analysis of qualitative data. In the next sections I introduce my case study and my research approach. I also discuss the research methods used to gather data and explain the ways in which the data was analysed. Finally, I refer to challenges and barriers that I encountered and provide a number of reflections concerning ethics and positionality.

1. Research context

My thesis considers as a case study the island of Lesbos, located in the North-Aegean Sea at the European borders with Asia and Turkey. Lesbos is the third largest island in Greece with a general population of 86,436. The island is also sometimes referred to as Mytilene, the name of the capital, with a population of 29,656. Lesbos lies in close proximity to the Turkish mainland separated only by a narrow strait, ranging from 6-10 km wide.

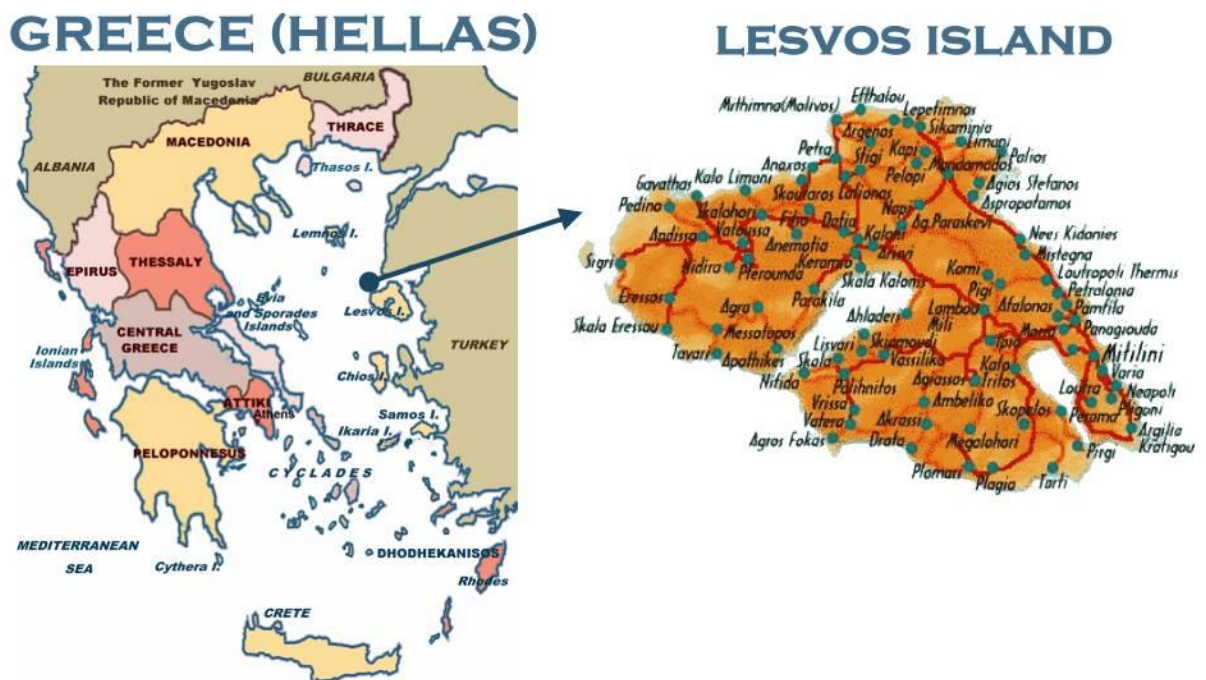


Figure 1: Map of Greece and Lesbos (Source: "Lesbos Map/ Google Maps," n.d. reproduced in Gillespie et al. (2016).)

Lesvos has a long history of refugee arrivals, starting at the beginning of the 20th century. After the 1922 Asia Minor catastrophe⁷ approximately one and a half million people, all Anatolian Greeks living in Turkey, fled by seeking sanctuary in Greece (Hernandez, 2016). A lot of my local interviewees emphasised that many Lesbians have families that were refugees from Asia Minor and consequently, there is a collective memory of refugeehood. As Panagitsa, a local volunteer told me, “you cannot imagine how much love the everyday local people have given to refugees arriving in 2015; they ‘embraced’ them, because they have themselves ancestors from the Minor Asia catastrophe, and they knew what it means to be a refugee”.

When I started my fieldwork in September 2018 there were more than 11,000 refugees stranded on Lesvos, and around 70 (International) Non-governmental Organisations ((I)NGOs), International Organisations (IOs) and EU agencies operating on the island. My research was mainly conducted in the town of Mytilene, where public services, local authorities, most of the grassroots movements, humanitarian organisations and EU agencies are located. Most of the refugee camps (Moria, Kara-Tepe, PIKPA) are based around Mytilene as well. I also visited other subareas or villages on Lesvos, like Moria, Afalonas, Panagiouda, Molyvos and Skala Sykamnias, where numerous humanitarian and security actors have intervened due to increased refugee arrivals to these places (section 4.2).

1.2 The population of interest

One of the main aims of this thesis is to explore the interactions and different points of view among various political and social actors on Lesvos. Thus, during my fieldwork I focused on the local, national and international level. In particular, I focused on members of local NGOs, grassroots movements and assemblies, working staff of local authorities and services, professional associations’ representatives, and members of informal refugee associations. In order to explore the points of view of those intervening and how they perceive their interaction with local populations, I also spoke to some of the international actors involved. Furthermore, I spoke with representatives from the Greek state, in order to explore how the Greek state interacts with intervening actors as well as with local populations.

⁷ Asia Minor Catastrophe (Greek: Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή) is the Greek historiographical term for the Greco-Turkish War (1919–1922).

1.2.1 Who is local?

A key group of interlocutors during my field work were “locals”. The main reason for adopting the term “local” in this thesis, instead of terms like “host community” or “indigenous populations”, is because the word “local” [ντόπιος] was widely used by the permanent residents of Lesvos and most of my informants. One of the aims of my research is not only to explore local populations’ voices but also to amplify these voices. Therefore, I consciously pay attention to how people who live on Lesvos self-define and I adopt the terms they use to describe themselves. It was also interesting that during my fieldwork not only “locals” defined themselves in this way, but the term was also used by the intervening actors with whom I spoke.

As a local from Lesvos myself, I am active participant in defining what “local” means and, inevitably, my preconceptions would, to an extent, inform my participant selection. For me, being a local is not restricted to people who are born and raised on Lesvos, but could also be someone who has integrated into the Lesvos community over the course of time and has become familiarised with the local customs and traditions. Through his/her integration and continuous interaction with locals she/he has become a part of locals’ culture and social lives. I have many acquaintances on Lesvos who belong to this category and now consider themselves as part of Lesvos’ local community. However, in order to be open to competing understandings of who a “local” is, I decided as part of my interview questions to ask the research participants themselves, including those I did not perceive to be locals.

The dominant consensus of my research participants about the definition of “local” was that the term is linked to geographic proximity and Lesvos, as an island, has a certain geographical boundary. This understanding usually resulted in the indigenous populations taking for granted who is local. This made sense to me to an extent, because until 2015 Lesvos could not be described as a multicultural community. In contrast to communities from northern and western European countries, like the UK for example, where towns and cities consist of populations from different ethnic origins and cultural backgrounds, Lesvos had a mainly ethnically homogenous population permanently living there. The vast majority of people permanently living on Lesvos were Greek citizens who were born and raised on Lesvos and people from other Greek regions who had resettled on Lesvos as public servants. There were also Albanians who had arrived on Lesvos during the ‘90s and a few expatriates permanently residing on Lesvos; however, the numbers of these populations were negligible. The main encounter that locals had with people from other countries and cultures was during

the tourist period in summer. As a result, many of my interviewees argued that local is someone who was born on Lesbos, raised there, speaks with the Lesbos dialect and is aware of the local traditions and customs. Nevertheless, many others had a broader understanding of who counts as local, by including people who were not born on Lesbos. Aris, for example, a local activist and scholar, claimed that:

We have an indigenous population on Lesbos with specific characteristics, experiences etc.; they are carrying memories, 1/3 out of them have an origin from Minor Asia, their ancestors were the 1922 refugees. Lesbos is also an administrative centre and the biggest island in the Aegean Sea; the prefecture of the Aegean and the former Ministry of the Aegean are here; there are big educational facilities, a big hospital etc. So, we have many residents from other places in Greece, who came to Lesbos in order to work and are now living on the island for many years. There is also a smaller but important subcategory of people who had chosen to come and live here in the previous decades, due to the way of life on Lesbos, the romantic, silent, close to nature and the alternative character of the place. All these people are a part of our local community.

Aris' point of view reveals that though it matters where one was born and raised, the term "local" is also relational. Literature suggests that each "place" can be seen as a meeting place, a network of social relations (Massey, 1994). Thus, the geographical connotations of the term "local" are bound with the active social place that it includes. Locality could be perceived as a notion "open to inclusion", a continuum in which agencies live and interact (Lekakis, 2008, pp. 311–312). As a result, in the selection of research participants, I adopted a broad understanding of who is local, by including rather than excluding populations as local. Even though some people were not born on Lesbos, I defined them as local, because they had been integrated into Lesbos' community over the course of time and they perceived themselves as locals or part of a local network. As I show in the next paragraphs this broad understanding mostly affected how I defined Lesbos' local civil society.

I identified five main categories of local populations whose interests and everyday lives have arguably mostly been affected by the refugee crisis. This five category "typology" is not dogmatic, since there were interviewees who were part of more than one category. For example, some of them were members of grassroots movements but also NGO workers or

local professionals. However, the categorisation below is helpful to better analyse and understand the multiple and diverse implications of the refugee crisis on different parts of Lesvos' local community. I will explain for each of the following categories how I operationalised the term "local":

i) *Civil society*

Before 2015 solidarity networks on Lesvos mainly consisted of indigenous populations or people from other places in Greece, who have been living on Lesvos for many years. However, during the refugee crisis some of these networks were transformed (see chapter 4). Some of them became NGOs and they also included new members, like refugees, activists and NGO workers, who arrived on Lesvos during the refugee crisis. I was aware of these developments before starting my fieldwork and during my fieldwork I observed in more detail how these local networks were operating. For example, before 2015, when I was visiting PIKPA – an open refugee camp on Lesvos – as an activist I was meeting with people who were familiar to me, most of whom were former colleagues and friends. When I visited PIKPA during my fieldwork the picture was quite different. The people I met were unknown to me, and many of them did not speak Greek. However, those new members, although not being "indigenous" to the island, had now become a part of the "local" network (which was gradually transformed into an NGO), due to their interaction and social relations with the preexisting indigenous members. All of these members were still referring to these networks (or NGOs) as "local".

ii) *Local authorities and services*

In the category local authorities and local services, the term "local" is less contested as it tends to be spatially defined. The local services they provide and the responsibilities they have are directly connected with locality. In this thesis I focus on those local services which were most affected by border regime policies, such as Lesvos' municipality and administrative public services.

iii) *Private sector*

Including the local private sector in my thesis is important because the economic implications of the refugee crisis on local businesses is considerable and has both positive and negative consequences on various sectors. In order to gain a broad understanding of these consequences I selected participants whose role was to officially represent local enterprises and professional associations. These research participants explained to me that

they represent the local private sector – local stores, cafes, restaurants, the tourist industry – and that they also self-define themselves as locals.

iv) *Local unemployed people*

Focusing on local unemployed people is important in this thesis. Being a local was an official criterion⁸ for unemployed people to find a job, by taking up opportunities emerging in the context of the refugee crisis. This category of people is also important since, as a result of the multiple crises that the Greek society has been experiencing since 2010, unemployment in Lesvos has increased from 7.7% in 2008 (Naftemporiki.gr, 2010) to 23.9% in 2019 (European Commission, 2020). I thus observed various conversations taking place among former unemployed locals who were working inside refugee camps and I also interviewed working staff from the Greek “job centre”, in order to better understand how the refugee crisis has affected the lives of local unemployed people.

v) *Informal association of established refugees*

It is important to realise that 2015 was not the first time that refugees arrived in Lesvos. There is a community of Afghan refugees who have lived on the island for the last 10-20 years. They are integrated in the local community of Lesvos and, as they told me, consider themselves a part of this community. They have established an “informal association” and it was important to speak with them in order to understand how the refugee crisis has affected their lives.

1.2.2 The multiple international actors

The intervening actors on Lesvos mainly consist of humanitarian and security organisations and EU agencies. While in chapter 4, “The humanitarian and security actors enabling the border regime”, I describe in detail who these actors are and what their role is, in this section I explain why I focus on a particular selection of these actors. Before starting my fieldwork, I already had a picture of the main actors that had thus far intervened on Lesvos, because I was informally speaking by Skype with former colleagues and acquaintances from Lesvos and I was closely following the local press. However, a few weeks before starting my fieldwork, I asked a former colleague working for the UNHCR to send me a list of the actors that were currently operating on Lesvos, according to the UNHCR. As she told me, this list was important because it included “some of the main ‘players’ on Lesvos”. I thus got an

⁸ According to art. 279, Law 3463/2006, the proof of locality is based on the number of years (at least two) that someone is a permanent resident of a specific place.

updated picture of these actors and could make a final decision about the main international actors that I would focus on.

That list included humanitarian actors like IOs and INGOs, as well as some EU agencies. From this list one could also see the range of the duties these actors had. So, I initially contacted the actors who had a wide range of duties and responsibilities for refugee management and had also established a long-term presence on the island. When I arrived on Lesbos, I found that there were many more humanitarian organisations that were not included on the UNHCR's list, but which also had a long-term presence on Lesbos and many of my interviewees – particularly those working for the humanitarian sector – were referring to them as “leading actors” on refugee management. Based on this, I decided to also contact these actors (which were mainly INGOs) and approach them for an interview.

1.2.3 The Greek state

At this point I should clarify that the Greek state was a major actor during the refugee crisis and its point of view was important to consider. I conducted only two interviews (section 4.1) with state officials and unofficially I also spoke with three more. However, I noticed that these research participants felt quite uncomfortable speaking with a researcher. As one of them told me, “the refugee crisis and the interventions on Lesbos are sensitive social and political issues and I would prefer not to officially speak about them”. During our conversations they were mostly following the line of the Greek government and their narratives were quite similar. So, in order to explore and analyse the point of view of the Greek state, I mostly focused on official documentary sources and statements (section 4.3), rather than on interviews. As I noticed, interviews did not have much added empirical value as data compared to official documents because people could not speak freely. Moreover, I made an ethical decision not to speak to more government officials as these people were feeling so uncomfortable.

2. The research approach

While my research is informed by my longstanding relation to Lesbos and refugee activism, the formal phase of my fieldwork took place between 1st of September – 16th of November 2018. On the one hand, I investigated local populations' perceptions, experiences and interpretations of the “refugee crisis” and the “border regime” on Lesbos, as well as their interactions with the Greek state and the intervening international actors. On the other hand, I focused on the main intervening actors on Lesbos, by exploring how they determine their

goals, what practices they follow, and how they interact with the Greek state and Lesvos' local populations.

Qualitative methodologies are well-suited to exploring the above issues. It is recognised that quantitative methodology is incapable of adequately reflecting and providing an insight into people's experiences, life histories and everyday behaviour (Silverman, 2004). By contrast, qualitative research is a powerful tool enabling the exploration of social life, cultures and people's experiences, motivations, behaviour, desires and needs. Qualitative methodologies enable us to go beyond 'who' is doing 'what' to the 'how' and 'why' behind the 'what' (Bloor, 1997).

I deployed a combination of multi-methods described by the term "triangulation" (Bell, 1999; Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). Based upon the fact that "objective reality can never be captured" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018, p. 5), qualitative research's multi-method "nature" in practice reflects the need of researchers to ascertain the validity of their findings. Moreover, the use of multiple methods can serve to overcome the weaknesses or biases of a single method (Ibid. p. 318). According to Flick (2002, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2018, p. 5), "the use of multiple methods or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question". Therefore, in order to analyse and understand the various interactions among different actors I deployed an ethnographic research approach which includes observation and semi-structured interviews combined with the analysis of documentary sources. Ethnography is a research approach commonly deployed in social anthropological research and principally includes the involvement of the researcher in the "social life of those he or she studies" (Bryman, 2016, p. 422). In particular, it draws attention to the fact that the ethnographer immerses him or herself in a group, observing behaviour, listening to what is said in conversations both between others and the fieldworker, and asking questions (Ibid., p. 423). As Bryman explains, typically, ethnographers gather further data through interviews and the collection of documents (Ibid.). In section 4 of this chapter I further reflect on the research tools and techniques I used during my fieldwork. I also explain that I took advantage of my legal skills by conducting an informed legal analysis of the various formal documentary sources related to the border regime policies in chapter 3: *The border regime as a state of exception*.

3. Research process

The fieldwork involved two inseparable processes: the process of negotiating access to people and sites and entering/staying in the field.

3.1 Negotiating access

The preparatory work for my research included the process of contacting my pre-established network on Lesbos (activists, human rights workers, local professionals and local stakeholders) one month before starting my fieldwork. Negotiating access continued for almost the whole period of my fieldwork. Access to key people may be difficult, not only because of where they are based, but also because of their availability, their trust in the researcher, and their desire to be interviewed (Yanacopulos, 2006, p. 47). So, negotiating access was a complex and non-linear process. Apart from contacting my pre-established network I also sent, during August 2018, invitation letters (Appendix 1) for interviews to those actors who were not a part of this network. Those actors included IOs, (I)NGOs, Lesbos municipality, the North Aegean Prefecture and the Secretariat General for the Aegean and Island Policy. I sent out a total of 13 invitation letters and I received positive replies to 4 of them.

The fact that I did not receive responses from everyone – mostly INGOs – was not a surprise for me, because I was aware that many of the actors operating on Lesbos have developed a sense of ‘research fatigue’ (Clark, 2008, also see section 6.2). However, when I started my fieldwork, I eventually managed to interview representatives or working staff of some of these organisations that had initially not responded to my request, by taking advantage of my pre-established network. The fact that I did not receive any response to some of my invitation letters also proved to have some advantages. When I managed to interview these INGOs’ working staff, many of them told me that if they had to officially represent their organisation they would not feel free to speak to me openly. Giorgos, for example, a senior area manager of one of the leading INGOs on Lesbos confessed to me:

You did very well that you communicated directly with me, through our common friend [...], and told me that you do not want to use the name of the NGO I am working for. If I had to officially represent my NGO, I would be obliged to provide you with some typical information, which I think would be meaningless for you.

Contacting my pre-established network before entering the field was part of my strategy to make sure that I would interview some key informants during the first days/weeks of my fieldwork and in the meantime, by taking advantage of this network, to find more participants for interviews through snowball sampling. Consequently, I found research participants by using a combination of purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The contacts that I approached from my pre-established network and the invitation letters that I sent to some of the major actors on Lesvos can be described as “purposive sampling”, because I focused on particular characteristics of the population of interest (e.g. concerning humanitarian actors, their continuous presence on Lesvos and the range of their duties and responsibilities in the refugee response), which would best enable me to answer my research questions. According to Bryman (2016, p. 407), qualitative researchers tend to emphasise purposive sampling, which places the investigator’s research questions at the heart of the sampling considerations. With snowball sampling the researcher initially samples a group of people relevant to the research questions, and these sampled participants propose other participants who have had the experience or the characteristics relevant to the research. These participants will then suggest others and so on (Ibid. p. 415). During my fieldwork in most of the cases I followed up on the snowball suggestions; in some other cases I did not, because some of the suggested research participants were not accessible (for example, a former local stakeholder was not living on Lesvos anymore and was not answering his phone when I called him). In some other cases the suggested research participants (for example, some local professionals) would probably repeat information that I had already gathered from interviews with their colleagues and their representatives. As I explain in section 3.3, in these cases, sampling more data would not lead to more information related to my research questions (Bryman, 2016, p. 412).

When I entered the field, negotiating access to people was not always easy. I repeatedly had to proceed in “negotiations” with the same or multiple agents/people, by contacting them both formally and informally. Furthermore, most of my interviewees and especially those working for (I)NGOs were usually working overtime. Consequently, there were instances that we had to postpone and reschedule an appointment two, three, or even four times. In addition, some of my interviewees, expressed suspicion, or even fear. As Sylvia, an NGO worker mentioned, “I do not believe that I am telling you all these things and they are recorded! If it was not you that I trust, there would be no chance that I would speak, my eyes have seen so many things”. Others feared the consequences for their careers. Some others already had some negative experiences with researchers or journalists in the past. The

president of a village near Moria camp told me that, “I do not trust anybody. A few months ago, a researcher asked me to do an interview and I accepted. A few days later I was informed by a friend that she was not a researcher but a journalist”.

The fact that I personally knew many of my interlocutors in advance was a big advantage for my fieldwork. Likewise, the fact that I was a local and I could speak with the local dialect (section 6.1) was of immense importance when I was speaking with locals who were not a part of my network. “You are from Parakoila [my village on Lesbos] and you can understand us” some of them told me. While I was interviewing a representative of a local service, we discovered that we are relatives; with some others we discovered that we had common friends or acquaintances. This was very important for them to trust me and speak to me more openly (Silverman, 2004, p. 37). A minor disadvantage with this kind of ‘proximity’ was that with some of those who were former colleagues or friends it took a while to proceed with the formal interview. For example, I had to meet a former colleague five times in order to finally proceed with the interview. Our first meetings were spent talking about her psychological wellbeing during the last three years. However, even these conversations provided useful insights into the psychological burden that locals or aid workers carry (chapter 2) and helped me to feel not just a researcher, but also a part of the everyday lives of local people, which is an important prerequisite for someone conducting ethnographic research (Ibid.).

3.2 Entering and staying in the field

My fieldwork could be roughly divided into three phases. During the first two weeks I was mainly concerned with getting familiarised with the new everyday reality on Lesbos, exploring what kinds of data I could collect, identifying and approaching participants, identifying potential barriers and restrictions in gaining access to sites and people and designing alternatives that would help me overcome such barriers. I initially approached my informants (from my pre-established network) informally as I thought it would be easier for them to give me an interview anonymously and with no prior approval and involvement from their NGOs’ or services’ headquarters. I mainly conducted interviews with members of local civil society (grassroots movements, local NGOs and informal refugee associations) and I collected rich data on locals’ experiences of interacting with international actors, on the issues of social cohesion on Lesbos and the escalation of xenophobia and racism.

After this initial phase, I started conducting interviews with local authorities and the local private sector, in order to explore the nature of local authorities' interaction or cooperation with international actors, to see how humanitarian discourses are affecting local businesses and local economy, and how professionals experience the interaction with international actors. I also started doing interviews with members of international actors on Lesbos, while I was also observing, taking notes and building rapport with the various participants. This phase lasted until the third week of October.

During the final stage of my fieldwork the aim was to cover some gaps. This included interviews with some INGOs having intervened on Lesbos, in order to explore what their role is, how they understand humanitarianism and permanent emergency, and what their experiences/perceptions are of interacting with local populations. Alongside this, I interviewed representatives of local services, in order to explore if and how they have been affected by the refugee crisis. During the entire research process I also dedicated much time to observing social events and meetings. I spent time with volunteers, activists, refugees, local professionals, villagers, NGO workers in open access camps, social and public spaces (section 4.2). From my observations and in-depth field discussions I kept detailed field notes, which are analysed in this thesis.

3.3 Leaving the field

Shortly after the mid-way point of my fieldwork I undertook an initial thematic analysis by identifying emerging issues. This was important because it still shaped my subsequent selection of interviewees. At the end of my fieldwork I had conducted 61 semi-structured interviews (section 4.1), produced extensive field notes (section 4.2) and gathered other primary data like information leaflets, and political brochures.

At this point, I recognised that I had reached data saturation, because sampling more data would not lead to more information related to my research questions (Bryman, 2016, p. 412). The amount and content of the data I had already collected was immense and rich and if I would collect more, I would not be able to handle and manage it. Moreover, I would not be able to handle the emotional risk (section 7.4), which is overwhelming when one researches sensitive topics. Finally, I also had to acknowledge the limitations of my research project.

4. Research tools and techniques

In order to answer my research questions, I deployed qualitative methods and particularly three different methods: qualitative interviews, non-participant observation with interaction, and the analysis of documentary sources. Those methods worked together to generate the materials needed to answer my research questions. More specifically, I needed the interviews and observation to place the documents in context, and vice versa (Axelsson, 2012, p. 75). Within each chapter I deploy the above methods simultaneously, meaning I use data gathered through all of the methods; the only exception is chapter 3: *The border regime as a state of exception*, where I mainly critically discuss and analyse official documentary sources (see section 4.3).

4.1 Qualitative interviews

For exploring the interactions between international, state and local actors it was important to ask the actors themselves about their perceptions and experiences. I achieved this by using qualitative interviews as a research methodology. Semi-structured interviews enable the flexibility of the interview process and have the capacity to elicit information from the participant's point of view (Yin, 2011; Brinkmann, 2014; Bryman, 2016). That is, I had different themes and questions I wanted to discuss with my interviewees, but I adjusted these questions depending on who my research participant was (e.g. a local or an international actor) as well as on the circumstances and the course the conversation took (Axelsson, 2012, p. 78). Interviewing offers the opportunity to explore and account for a range of neglected voices (Cloke *et al.*, 2004, p. 151; in Axelsson, 2012). Interviews were mainly held in the form of conversation. In many cases, when I was asked, I shared my own personal experiences with the interviewees, and I noticed that this helped in building rapport and trust. As Karen O' Reilly (2009) argues, conversations encourage reflexivity on both sides, and allow the time it takes for participants to explore their own beliefs, and to express contradictory opinions, doubts, fears, hopes, and dreams.

I conducted a total of 61 interviews. All of these were with adults (23 women and 38 men) and their ages ranged from 20 to 65 years old. All interviews were conducted one to one, over one session and lasted on average forty-five minutes. The shortest interview was five minutes and the longest one two hours and forty-five minutes. In all cases participants could decide themselves whether or not to have the interviews recorded. The vast majority of the interviewees were happy to be recorded, but for those who preferred not to be recorded, I

made notes during the interview and took more detailed notes after the interview had finished. Most of the interviews were carried out in Greek and some of them in English.

My research questions suggested that three main categories should be sampled: International actors, the Greek state, and local populations (Table 1). I did 15 interviews with international actors, including current and former working staff, spokespersons, and senior management staff of IOs and INGOs. Those were some of the main actors having intervened on Lesbos. The aim was to explore their role, how they understand humanitarianism and the implementation of exceptional policies, how they understand the notion of accountability and what are their experiences and perceptions of interacting with local populations. As I explained in section 1.2, I also conducted two interviews with state officials, since the Greek state was one of the main actors during the refugee crisis. Nevertheless, in order to explore and analyse the point of view of the Greek state, I mostly focused on official documentary sources and statements (section 4.3). The majority of the interviews (44) involved local populations, since I wanted to amplify their voices and shed more light on their concerns. Table 1 below provides an overview of the type of and number of research participants:

Actors	Number of interviews
A. IOs and INGOs	15
1. International Organisations	<i>5 (3 interviews with spokespersons and 2 with senior staff)</i>
2. International Non-Governmental Organisations	<i>10 (5 interviews with spokespersons and 5 with working staff)</i>
B. The Greek State	2
Anonymous	2
C. Local Populations	44
1. Local Authorities and Public Services	<i>8 (2 interviews with Lesbos' vice mayors and 6 with public services' directors)</i>
2. Local NGOs	<i>5 interviews with NGOs' working staff</i>
3. Local Networks	<i>10 interviews with activists</i>
4. Local Assemblies	<i>10 (5 interviews with presidents of Lesbos' villages and 5 interviews with members of villages' associations)</i>
5. Professionals' Associations	<i>6 (3 interviews with representatives of professional associations and 3 with hotel and shop owners)</i>
6. Refugees	<i>5 interviews with Afghan refugees living on Lesbos in the past 10-20 years</i>

Table 1: Type and number of research participants

4.2 Non-participant observation

One key aim of my fieldwork was to get first-hand experience of how different actors interact with each other and how the border regime influences the everyday lives of local populations on Lesvos. To achieve this, my research engaged an overt, non-participant observation with interaction approach. This means that the researcher “observes (sometimes minimally) but does not participate in group’s core activities. Interaction with group members occurs, but often tends to be through interviews which, along with documents, tend to be the main source of data” (Bryman, 2016, p. 437). I had also considered participant observation, which requires that the researcher becomes a participant in the culture or context being observed (Silverman, 2004). However, the fact that the sites, contexts and groups on Lesvos I observed were multiple, made it practically impossible to simultaneously participate in each group’s core activities. I thus focused on attending various meetings where multiple actors were participating, in order to observe their interactions (see below).

Furthermore, I used overt participation by revealing my true identity as a researcher to all participants (Bryman, 2016). As Lesvos is a small community, and it was already known to many of my former colleagues and acquaintances on Lesvos that I am doing a PhD, this information would spread quickly in the small community. Also, hiding my role as a researcher would be ethically wrong. Following the ethical principles guidelines of the Open University (no date);

Researchers should be open and honest about the purpose and content of their research [...] Deception or covert collection of data should only take place where it is essential to achieve the research results required, where the research objective has strong scientific merit and where there is an appropriate risk management and harm alleviation strategy.

In terms of note taking, Bryman (2016, pp. 442–444) suggests the following field notes classification; (i) “Mental notes” when it is inappropriate for the researcher to be seen taking notes; (ii) “Jotted notes” where the researcher keeps very brief notes on pieces of paper or notebooks and write more detailed notes later; (iii) “Full field notes” which include detailed notes made immediately after the observation and discussions; (iv) “Methodological notes”, which include separate observations on methodological decisions and experiences in the

field. I decided to keep multiple forms of field notes, according to the circumstances. I kept, for example, mental notes when I was speaking at cafes with former colleagues and friends. I kept jotted notes which involved key phrases and quotes in a notebook I always carried with me. Also, at the end of each day I wrote detailed notes in my research diary. I also kept methodological notes by mainly recording experiences and barriers I confronted in the field (section 7.4). Overall, my field notes included observations, in-depth field discussions, and my own thoughts, emotions and reflections. After my fieldwork I coded these notes, like I did with my interview transcripts (section 5). These notes helped to better shape my understanding and make sense of the field. Within my thesis I frequently refer to these observations and my own reflections.

By taking advantage of my local knowledge and my Greek language skills, I attended formal and informal meetings taking place on Lesbos: meetings of local solidarity networks, weekly meetings among actors, demonstrations and events on the refugee issue. Observations were made and detailed field notes were taken, on an almost everyday basis, on the activities and issues discussed. The following sites were identified and chosen to be included in my observations:

Coordination meetings and working groups: The UNHCR organises different working groups and the most important of them is the bi-weekly meeting called Inter-Agency Consultation Forum. It is held at the General Secretariat for the Aegean and Island Policy for actors currently working on the island. Other working groups coordinated by the UNHCR are also meeting on a weekly or bi-weekly basis at the UNHCR premises in Mytilene. The aim of these meetings was to provide first-hand information so that all actors could inform each other about the current situation on Lesbos and get the latest updates. I attended seven of these meetings, which were very interesting, because multiple actors were participating and interacting, ranging from EU agencies and (I)NGOs to local actors, activists, journalists and researchers. There were around 60-100 participants at each Inter-Agency Consultation Forum meeting, while there were on average of about 10 participants in the meetings of the other working groups.

Public Spaces: The streets, squares, and coffee shops of Mytilene where activists, refugees, locals, and NGO staff were gathered or hanging around were an important part of my fieldwork and a valuable source in terms of data collection. *Ermou* is a very busy street, because the central market (Agora) of Mytilene is there. I had the opportunity to

spontaneously speak with numerous shop owners and exchange opinions about the refugee issue. Some of the shop owners were old friends and the good weather conditions allowed us to take some chairs and sit outside on the main street, where we could also speak with other people passing by. During these conversations I could also observe how the border regime has affected the everyday lives of local people and their businesses. I was also meeting at coffee shops in Mytilene with friends and former colleagues who work for NGOs and usually other (I)NGO workers would join us. Thus, we had interesting conversations, which covered issues like humanitarianism, permanent emergencies, the refugee industry, etc. In the city center it was hard to miss the hundreds of refugees hanging around and the reactions of some locals (chapter 2). In the main streets I could also observe NGO mini-vans with their staff passing by all the time, while NGO workers' presence was also very obvious in the streets, bars and cafes of Mytilene. Also, Sapho's square in Mytilene is a meeting point for people. Several social events and protests take place there, including anti-fascist and anti-racist protests, as well as protests against the "financial crisis". On 18 September 2018, I joined an antiracist demonstration and on 06 November 2018 a demonstration against the financial crisis' austerity measures. It was interesting to observe who was participating and what demands the protestors had. Other interesting public spaces that I visited were the shores where refugees arrive and the "lifejackets graveyard", a dumping ground for lifejackets and dinghies. One could observe there the various NGOs, journalists and researchers taking photographs and interviewing refugees (see section 7.4).

PIKPA camp- Lesvos Solidarity: PIKPA camp is coordinated by NGO workers and volunteers. It is an autonomous and self-organised site which mainly hosts families with children and refugees with health problems (Solidarity Lesvos, 2018). PIKPA used to be a part of a local network, called "the village of all together", of which I was one of the founding members. PIKPA was an interesting site during my fieldwork to explore how local and international volunteers/activists interact.

Mosaic Social Support Centre: Mosaic is a social centre which is self-organised by local and international workers and volunteers. Its members support refugees through various cultural activities. Mosaic is an open space for both refugees and locals. My hotel was next to Mosaic and my visits there were quite frequent. I could speak there with various locals, refugees, NGO workers, lawyers and activists.

The refugee camps: There are two main camps on Lesbos. *Kara Tepe* camp is coordinated by Lesbos' municipality. It mainly hosts families with children and vulnerable people. Although the coordination of the camp is carried out by Lesbos municipality, there are also various NGOs which are involved in the daily running of the space. Refugees move freely inside and outside the camp, they can walk to the city centre and return to Kara Tepe. *Moria camp* is an open site for the vast majority of refugees living there, while a part of this camp is a closed site for around two hundred refugees. The capacity of the camp is around 3,000 people, but during my fieldwork the population of refugees living there was around 9,000. It is a complex space of control where various agents, services and organisations operate: the police, Frontex, the Asylum Service, EASO, UNHCR, IOM, (I)NGOs and public servants. The camp is located almost 1 km away from the village of Moria, in a former military camp. When driving from Mytilene to Kara Tepe and Moria (Figure 2) one will witness on the main streets groups of refugees walking, in order to go to Mytilene and then back again to the camps. At these camps I had the opportunity to speak with refugees, locals who work there, as well as NGO workers.

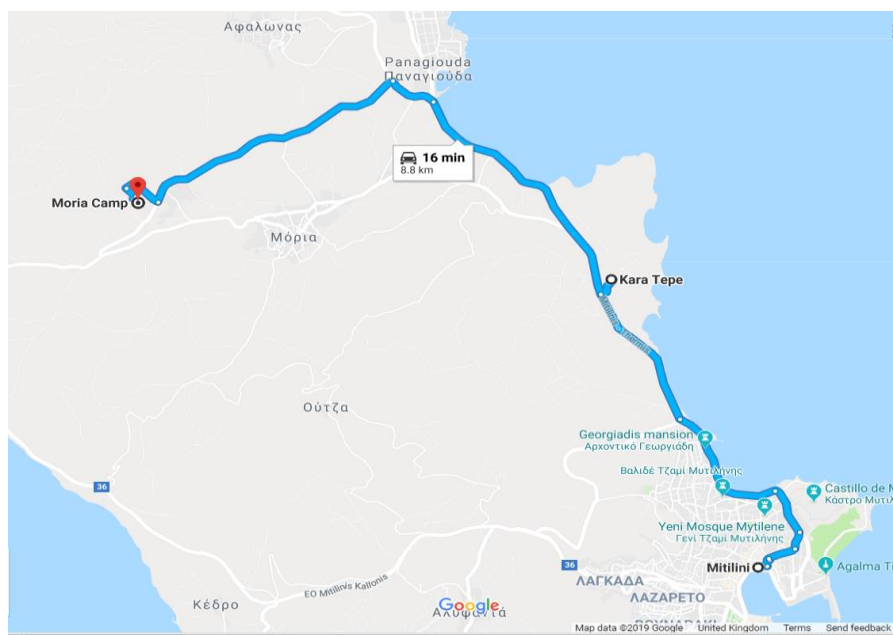


Figure 2: The route from Mytilene to the main refugee camps (image taken from google maps).

Moria village, with a population of around 1,100 people and 6 km away from Mytilene is situated almost next to the camp of Moria. It is the village most affected by the border regime. As a result, I decided to dedicate more time to observing this village. The first impression someone gets when arriving to the village is of refugees hanging around on its streets. If you stand in the cafes and listen more carefully to the conversations of locals, it is easy to understand that their main concern is Moria camp and the problems surrounding it.

In many of the Greek villages, women and men socialise differently. This meant that in some cases I had to visit different sites in villages in order to speak with men and women. Men, for example, go to *kafeneio* (coffeehouse), where they drink coffee or alcohol. The president of Moria village encouraged me to go there and speak with people. *Kafeneio* is a very interesting site, as a social institution. Locals are taking part in the social life of the coffeehouse on an everyday basis and it has great importance in Greek social life (for a short overview see: Loizos and Papataxiarchis, 1991). It is not just a place where you go to grab a coffee, it's a way of living and a significant part of daily Greek culture. Women in Moria, although not restricted from going to the *kafeneio*, were socialising in different ways. One of them was the 'Moria cultural association'. I met twice with around 30 women from this association and had the opportunity to discuss with them their experiences of the refugee issue. During my visits to Moria village I also had the opportunity to witness first-hand the everyday problems both refugees and the residents of the village are facing. The fact that I was a local and I could speak with the Lesvos dialect made both women and men at Moria welcome me at *kafeneio* and the cultural association. They wanted, as they told me, to speak to somebody who could listen to them. As a villager at the *kafeneio* told me, "you are a local and you can thus understand our worries".

Other villages: I also visited other villages that have been affected by the border regime. Those villages are Panagiouda, Afalonas, Thermi, Skala Sykamnias, Petra and Molyvos. People welcomed me there and we mainly had discussions about how their everyday lives have changed since 2015 and about their interactions with NGOs.

Finally, I attended a press conference concerning racism and fake news, organised by the Aegean Journalists' Association on 29 September 2018. I also attended the "European Conference on EU migration policy and its implications on borders", which took place at Thermi/Lesvos on 06 October 2018. I had the opportunity to speak about my research and have discussions with former colleagues and representatives of INGOs.

4.3 The analysis of documentary sources

Observation and qualitative interviews might not be adequate to fully understand the processes and mechanisms through which a "state of exception" is imposed, a humanitarian intervention and a permanent emergency are enacted, and the linkages between different actors. For this purpose, I used a different method, the analysis of official and unofficial

documentary sources. Yanacopulos (2006, p. 49), by referring to research on Transnational Advocacy Networks, suggests that documentary methods are often used for historical research but can also be used for research when it is difficult to find data on something recent, or when it is difficult to contextualise meaning and impact as it is happening. Axelsson (2012, p. 73) remarks that documentary sources are useful for identifying topics for research and for contextualising primary data, meaning that the right documents may give the researcher an in-depth understanding of the research problem in ways that in certain instances make them more suitable than interviews or other possible methods.

The documents I selected include a range of official and non-official documentary sources. Official sources include (I)NGOs' reports as well as international, EU and Greek legislation on border control and migration, statements by the EU, Greek ministries and the Greek state. In chapter 3, I extensively refer to these official documentary sources in order to interpret legislation and explore how various border policies violate the rule of law in terms of legitimisation. I conducted a legal analysis by taking advantage of my legal skills obtained when I trained as a lawyer. As I also explained, in order to analyse the point of view of the Greek state, I selected various official statements and press releases by the Greek state, ministries, etc. Within my thesis I am also using a number of unofficial documentary sources, including websites and newspaper articles. These documents represent different accounts of the same events that I had explored through interviews and observation.

5. Data analysis

Once I collected data from interviews and field notes, a transcription and coding process followed. Due to the sensitive nature of the research, I stored all data in the safe drive of the Open University, I anonymised all of my research participants, and I used pseudonyms instead of the real names. Interviews, either digitally recorded or handwritten, were transcribed, in order for themes to be elaborated (Mack *et al.*, 2005, p. 84). The process of analysis involved the transcription and coding of interview data verbatim. During the transcription, pauses or verbal expressions remained in the text with pauses marked with [pause] in text. Coding followed after transcription.

In particular, CAQDAS software was used in the form of NVivo. The NVivo software package is broadly used in qualitative research as a useful tool in storing, organising, coding, writing/editing and analysing data (Yin, 2011). The analysis of the data involved a number

of steps. First, categorising and filing the interviews to help organise and structure the analysis. I followed Saldana's (2009, p. 18) suggestion that,

[...] if you are working with multiple participants in a study, it may help to code one participant's data first, then progress to the second participant's data [...] the second data set will influence and affect your recoding of the first participant's data, and the consequent coding of the remaining participants' data.

To that end, I grouped my 61 interviews in NVivo around a series of key actors: International organisations, local populations, the Greek state and also subcategories of these key actors:

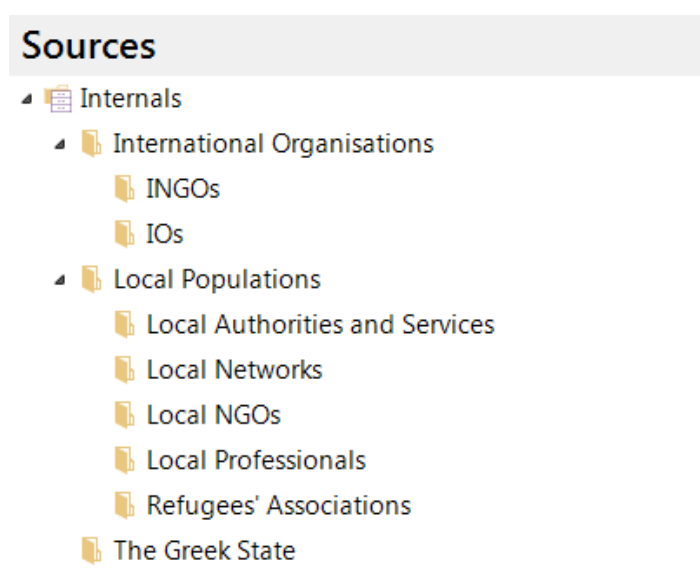


Figure 3: Sources

The next step after organising the data was to identify key topics as the starting point for coding the data. The aim was to develop categories that group words/phrases with similar meanings or connotations to be able to look for patterns and make sense of large quantities of qualitative data (Weber, 1990, p. 37). As Charmaz (1983: in Bryman 2016: 573) notes, “codes...serve as shorthand devices to label, separate, compile, and organize data”. At a first stage these were core themes that were developed in my theoretical framework (i.e. state of exception, permanent emergency, humanitarianism, colonialism etc.). Instead of code, NVivo uses the term ‘node’. The core themes form the parent nodes, from which child nodes (sub-codes) were developed. This system of parent and child nodes allows for a more in-depth exploration of the various themes in an organised way. For example, I am using

“crypto-colonialism” as a parent node and then I have a series of child nodes under it: behaviours/ practices, funding mechanism, intervention of actors etc.



Crypto - Colonialism	39	139
Behaviours - Practices	25	55
EASO	4	19
EU countries practices	1	4
Frontex	2	4
Funding Mechanism	7	10
Intervention of Actors	24	53
Live governance	1	1
Stereotypes	4	6
The Laboratory of Europe	11	25
UNHCR	6	16

Figure 4: Thematic coding

Lichtman suggests that qualitative research studies can generate 80-100 codes that will be organised into 15-20 categories which eventually synthesised into five to seven major concepts (2006 in: Saldaña, 2009, p. 20). As Saldana notes, “coding is a cyclical process” (2009, p. 29) and some of the ‘First Cycle’ codes may be later subsumed by other codes, relabelled, or dropped all together. “As you progress toward Second Cycle coding, there may be some rearrangement and reclassification of coded data into different and even new categories” (Ibid. p.10).

The coding strategy that I employed is informed by “thematic analysis”. Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017, p. 3352). Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 81) argue that “through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data.” Broadly speaking what actually constitutes a theme is:

- i. a category identified by the analyst through his/her data, ii. that relates to his/her research focus (and quite possibly the research questions), iii. that builds on codes identified in transcripts and/or field notes and iv. that provides the researcher with the basis for a theoretical understanding of his/her data that can make a theoretical contribution to the literature relating to the research focus (Bryman, 2016, p. 584)

My theoretical framework provided the basis for the thematic analysis but while I was transcribing and analysing the data, I expanded my child-noding system to be able to account

for new themes that emerged. Consequently, this led me to return to reading new literature emerging from the new nodes/themes. Therefore, the coding was both based on the conceptual framework of the theory and at the same time provided space for new themes to emerge from the data. As a result, my methodological strategy can be described as both inductive and deductive. Induction is a process of drawing inferences from observations in order to make generalisations, while the deductive logic of inquiry is explicitly based on preconceptions and is thus ‘theory-driven’ (Potter, 2006, pp. 82–83). Babbie (2013, p. 52) notes that, “deduction begins with an expected pattern that is tested against observations, whereas induction begins with observations and seeks to find a pattern within them”. My research had an inductive dimension in the sense that I explored themes and topics emerging from the data that were outside the understandings of the theories that were part of my theoretical framework and I was open to new and emergent themes and findings outside of these theoretical boundaries.

6. Problems and barriers

In section 3.1 I referred to some complexities regarding the issue of gaining access. In this section I further explore some challenges and barriers that arose during my fieldwork and how I dealt with them.

6.1 Positionality

Before starting with my fieldwork one of my concerns was “how native a native researcher is” (Narayan, 1993). On the one hand, many of my interlocutors on Lesbos knew me as a “local”, a lawyer or an activist. I was, in a way, an ‘insider’, having a “pre-knowledge” of the refugee issue on Lesbos and the local culture. However, as a researcher this time, I paid attention to the diverse implications of being considered an insider. I had to explain to some of my interviewees/acquaintances the limitations of my new role, including, for example, that I could not intervene as a lawyer. It was not a surprise for me that there were refugees from my pre-established network who were asking for legal advice. In those cases, I explained that it would be better for them to speak with a lawyer who works in the field and has a better picture than me of the most recent legal developments surrounding international protection. On the other hand, when I entered the field, I noticed that I was not only an insider but an outsider too.

I had moved from Greece to the UK in September 2015 and the last time I visited Lesbos was for two weeks during September 2015, at the peak of the refugee crisis. Until then I was

considered to be an ‘expert’ in migration and refugee law. I had been invited several times by the Greek government as an expert in law-making processes around the establishment of the Greek asylum service and the establishment of reception facilities. For many years I was one of the few lawyers who had unlimited access to detention facilities in the Aegean islands and, as a result, I was very well known to those actors focusing on the refugee issue. In addition, as a local from Lesbos, I was also one of the founding members of networks and grassroots movements and consequently I knew personally almost everybody who was a local activist, volunteer, professional, and stakeholder.

However, when I entered the field this was no longer the case. During the first days of my presence there I was recalling some lyrics of a Greek song that said, “nothing has changed but nothing is like it used to be”. Although the place was familiar to me, the town of Mytilene had changed a lot. In the aftermath of the refugee crisis many new cafes and restaurants had opened. In the streets of the town one could see refugees and NGO workers everywhere, as well as mini-vans with labels of their organisations. Outside Mytilene two enormous refugee camps had been established and when speaking with local people the refugee issue was one of their main concerns. When I started conducting my interviews I also realised that I was not as ‘expert’ as I used to be, since I was not so well informed of the new legal processes. I was also meeting with people who were working for NGOs and many of them were new faces for me. They were now the experts and they were treating me as a non-expert.

For those who were not aware of my background as a lawyer, activist or local I was an outsider, another researcher among the many who came to Lesbos in the aftermath of the refugee crisis and also someone with whom the respondents did not share common experiences (Roth, 2015, p. 175). When speaking with locals from my pre-established network the roles had also changed. I had the feeling that I was no longer an active member of the local community and thus I was not as local or native as I used to be (section 1.2.2). I was to some extent an outsider regarding locals’ everyday lives and realities in relation, for example, to the new border regime there.

Thus, although I had a deep understanding of the situation on Lesbos before 2015, the new reality that was shaped after 2015 suggested that my fieldwork would provide me with new useful and interesting insights. For example, I could now observe that so many diverse actors settled on Lesbos and were interacting with each other. This was also the first time that I could observe thousands of refugees hanging around in the streets of Mytilene and

interacting with locals, instead of being detained in camps, as was the case before 2015. This realisation motivated me to explore the situation on Lesbos with an open mind, by not taking everything for granted. I was aware that familiarity with the field can lead to a loss of “objectivity” and to an increased risk for the researcher of making assumptions based on prior knowledge or experience (Taylor, 2011). Nevertheless, the realisation that I was occupying a hybrid position of insider/outsider, native/non-native helped me to avoid being too subjective or biased. In order to mitigate the negative consequences of being both an insider and an outsider, I tried listening very carefully to what my research participants had to say, and I was keeping detailed field notes of my thoughts, emotions and concerns on my positionality. I reflected upon them throughout the research process and incorporated them within the data analysis (Greene, 2014). The aim was to benefit as much as possible from the advantages of being an outsider and/or an insider. An insider can generate rich data and insightful analyses of processes in the field, while conducting research as an outsider brings an additional perspective that allows for capturing the heterogeneity of the field (Roth, 2015, p. 175).

6.2 An over-researched location

From 2015 onwards the refugee issue on Lesbos has attracted much attention; journalists, filmmakers, and mass media from all over the world have swamped Lesbos. In addition, as I showed in my introductory chapter, the academic literature focusing on refugees and borders turned Lesbos from an under-researched to an over-researched location. As a result, NGO practitioners, local stakeholders, activists, and refugees found themselves in a difficult and uncomfortable situation: they had to deal with the overload of work, whilst refugees had to deal with the enduring waiting in unbearable living conditions. Local people had to deal with the shock of witnessing and managing thousands of refugees arriving to the island. Most of the local people from my pre-established network confessed to me that they have stopped giving interviews. Nikos, a local activist, admitted that, “during the last year, when I receive an email from a researcher or journalist, I usually delete it. You cannot imagine how many requests for interviews we have been receiving”. I could completely understand those people’s concerns because, when I was working as a lawyer in Greece, I also received a vast number of requests for interviews by researchers and mainly journalists and this was sometimes annoying and distracting. This made me empathise with my interviewees and in many cases I felt guilty for putting them in the position of the interviewee. I knew how difficult it is for someone working under extremely difficult conditions to be interviewed

over and over again and to deal with research fatigue. According to Tom Clark (2008, p. 955),

[...] research fatigue can be said to occur when individuals and groups become tired of engaging with research and it can be identified by a demonstration of reluctance toward continuing engagement with an existing project, or a refusal to engage with any further research.

It has been argued that the phenomenon of “over-research” is “under-researched” (Neal *et al.*, 2016) and this is a further reason why Lesvos as an over-researched location is interesting to explore. The extensive research interest in Lesvos created a “spectacularisation” (Ibid. p. 504) of the island and the refugees arriving there, in ways that reinforce the position of Lesvos as a symbolic location thus leaving other tensions and contradictions within the island marginalised or neglected. The fact that the research focus of the vast majority of journalists and researchers was mainly on refugees, on reception facilities and broadly speaking on the border regime worked positively for me, because there was not much focus on local populations’ concerns. For example, many of the villages’ presidents confessed to me that, “finally someone came here to ask ourselves how we see the whole situation and how we feel about it”. They mentioned that it was important for them that I was taking their perspectives into consideration, indicating that they felt marginalised and overlooked by journalists, researchers and policy makers (also see: Roth, 2015, p. 175).

One further problem related to over-research is, in Sukarieh and Tanock’s (2012) words, “the expectations and promises of social change”. These expectations were mainly expressed by local populations and refugees. “So many researchers and journalists are coming here but the situation is getting worse and worse”, many of my interlocutors told me. In those cases, I tried to explain that one key aim of my research is to explore the refugee crisis from a different angle, by giving particular attention to locals’ voices, which have been overlooked. I explained that with a single research project, like mine, it is difficult to bring about any structural change, but that I strongly believed that it was important for a conversation to start taking place on an issue that had not received much attention until now and that a research project like this could be a good starting point.

Furthermore, as I mentioned in section 3.1, many of my interviewees were very suspicious of journalists and researchers due to some unpleasant experiences they had themselves or

had heard about from others. I mainly overcame this obstacle by being honest with my interviewees about my research purpose and by not giving false promises. In addition, in order to gain trust, I also took advantage of my locality and my acquaintances, who had introduced me to people.

I also found that many of my interviewees had gained “a familiarity with social research” and possessed “research savvy” knowledge (Neal *et al.*, 2016), based on previous conversations that they had with various researchers or journalists. This was sometimes problematic for my fieldwork, because due to the experiences that they had with previous interviews they were used to describing the living conditions in refugee camps and the problems that refugees were facing. When they were starting to mention these issues I did not want to interrupt them, and I would let them speak. In other cases, especially when I knew them personally, I reminded them that what they say is very interesting, but that this was not the focus of my research and that we could discuss it outside the context of the interview.

7. Ethical considerations

Lesvos is a location where many refugees are stranded in a kind of open prison and this is a sensitive social and political issue. In addition, the lives of some of the interviewees have been negatively affected by multiple crises during the last years. Topics defined “sensitive” are those “that have the potential to cause harm to participants, eliciting powerful emotional responses such as anger, sadness, embarrassment, fear and anxiety” (Elmir *et al.*, 2011). According to Roth (2015, p. 177), some of the core aspects of research ethics include informed consent, voluntary participation and the refusal to answer inappropriate questions as well as confidentiality and anonymity. During my research the following ethical issues were considered.

7.1 Harm or risk to participants

No harm or risk, manifested through various ways (emotional, embodied, psychological anxiety, disorder, trauma, distress, pain and suffering) must be caused to participants. It is suggested that in research concerning sensitive topics a researcher’s empathy, reciprocity and building rapport are pivotal in cultivating a suitable environment in order to minimize any risk to the participants (Elmir *et al.*, 2011). Hence, during my fieldwork, I counted on my long-term previous working experience as a lawyer and humanitarian worker for NGOs. I am qualified, trained and experienced in taking interviews and recording personal histories

and handling people with care, sensitivity and empathy, and therefore, being cautious and alert during the interviews.

I also considered Elmir et al., (Ibid. p. 14), who emphasise the value of a suitable environment and context for interviews with participants, and the importance that the research be carried out in an environment that is safe and comfortable for the participants. To that end I let the interviewees decide about the place where our interview would take place. Some of the interviews were carried out in public, including in cafeterias and bars, while others took place at the offices of NGOs or public services. I also explained to interviewees that they could refuse to answer questions that they might consider to be inappropriate or make them feel uncomfortable. In addition, there was not any form of coercion of research participants to take part in my research. Even though many of my participants were from my pre-established networks in Greece none of them has any kind of 'dependent relationship' with me. Their decision to participate in my research was completely voluntary and it was not influenced by any kind of expectation of economic benefits or rewards.

7.2 Informed consent

There was no uninformed consent, deception or exploitation, since these could cause harm to participants (Yin, 2011; Bryman, 2016). Valid consent was achieved through the distribution of information sheets, publicity leaflets, and consent forms to all participants (see appendices 2, 3 and 4). The information sheet included the aims and purposes of the research and the reasons why participants' involvement was sought for the research. Since I interviewed various people, the content of the information sheets was adjusted to the prospective participants' circumstances. In addition, all of these forms were also translated into the Greek language. The information sheet also included information concerning the participants' right to stop and withdraw from the research at any time. My full contact details, as well as those of my lead supervisor were provided, in case the participants wished to contact us for queries or to declare problems related to the interview process or the researcher. Participants could also choose whether or not the interview was digitally recorded. They also had the option of giving verbal consent instead of signing the consent form and the vast majority preferred to give verbal consent. A few of them told me that they felt nervous about being recorded so I took notes during and after those interviews. Finally, the participants were informed about how research findings would be disseminated.

While there was a potential risk that being known as a local, lawyer or an activist could create possible ‘power’ imbalances that might influence participant consent, as a local I never possessed any formal authority that could influence a participant’s consent. As an activist I was a member of grassroots movements that were not characterised by any kind of hierarchical structure, and consequently, there was not any kind of power differential among members of the networks. Finally, as a lawyer, I did not conduct interviews with any of my former clients, since this could possibly influence the participant’s consent.

7.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality and anonymity are two separate but related issues. They assure that data obtained in research does not disclose the identity of an individual, by usually anonymising individuals and places (Wiles et al. 2008, in Roth, 2015, p. 177). The protection of the anonymity of the participants is considered to be an important ethical issue (Yin, 2011). Thus, I was very cautious regarding privacy and anonymity of the identities of my research participants (Human Participants and Materials Ethics Committee, 2006), by ensuring that they could not be identified or identifiable when my research findings are being presented (Potter, 2006). I also informed participants that confidentiality and anonymity would be preserved and that pseudonyms instead of real names would be used.

Sometimes it may not be sufficient to assign pseudonyms, because it is possible for insiders to identify the interviewees (Roth, 2015, pp. 177–178). In order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, I have removed identifying information such as nationality, age and the organisations the participants worked for. Especially for some interviewees, their role and experience are likely to identify them (for example, within the organisations/local authorities they represent). As a result, anonymity of such interviewees is protected by generally referring in my thesis to “a representative or spokesperson of an international organisation” (without mentioning the name of the organisation) or “a member/representative of a public service”. International organisations usually have a spokesperson, who represents the organisation publicly (to media, researchers etc). Even in these cases, the name of the interviewee is anonymised by just referring to a spokesperson of an organisation. The name of an organisation is only mentioned in my thesis in those cases where the organisation explicitly wanted its name to be mentioned. To that end the consent form included a tick box saying, “I am happy for the name of my organisation to be used (*please tick if applicable*)”.

7.4 Risks for the researcher

At this point I should acknowledge that the psychological impact while I was conducting my fieldwork was considerable. This impact was frequently amplified due to the fact that I have an emotional connection with Lesbos. As I previously explained, I was born and raised there, I was a member of activist networks, and also worked for several years on the island as a lawyer.

First, watching on an everyday basis refugees experiencing dehumanisation and social harm (Iliadou, 2019b) is a situation that can cause distress and sadness for anybody who visits Lesbos. In the next chapter I also discuss the impact of this situation on locals' psychological wellbeing. Especially when I visited Moria camp I was initially shocked. The last time I had visited the camp was in September 2015, during the peak of the refugee crisis. I observed that the camp had expanded to such an extent that it did not reflect the picture that I had from 2015. Inside the camp refugees were living in awful conditions, while around the camp there were hundreds of summer tents, where families with their children were sleeping rough, surrounded by rubbish. I also noticed that there was much tension and many people were shouting. I witnessed a group of refugees having a dispute and making insulting gestures to each other. I then decided to walk a few hundred meters away from the camp and at some point I saw an old man standing under an olive tree and crying alone. A former colleague told me that the camp is like a *favela*; however, a *favela*, compared to what I saw, would probably be a five-star hotel, I thought. I also felt ashamed as a local from Lesbos. I frequently asked myself why, as a local community, we allowed this inhuman situation to emerge and become enduring. This also made me feel guilty for leaving the island in 2015 and not remaining there to fight against the border regime policies that produced this inhumane situation.

In other cases, I also felt sceptical and even angry with the way various people were treating refugees, including insulting xenophobic and racist narratives against refugees by many locals. In some cases I witnessed refugees being treated disrespectfully, even by humanitarian workers. A characteristic example took place at the end of September, while I was having my lunch at a tavern in Mytilene. Next to me a group of young international NGO workers were also having their lunch. I was listening to them telling stories about refugees from Moria camp and laughing. One of them said that two days ago, while he was passing out of a summer tent, he accidentally stepped on the leg of a refugee who was sleeping. He reproduced the scream of the refugee when he stepped on him and everybody

started laughing. “Today I did this again, to see if he would have the same reaction and surprisingly he made the same sound”, he said, and they continued laughing.

Another incident, showing how part of the refugee industry works, took place in mid-October, when I visited Molyvos village, at the north coast of Lesbos. I observed a group of people interviewing and filming a refugee and afterwards giving him a lifejacket and asking him to get into the sea and pretend that he just arrived. After a while I visited the “lifejackets graveyard” (section 4.2), which is a few kilometres away from the coast where the above filming was taking place. The same group arrived after a while and started filming another refugee who was previously watching the filming. He climbed at the top of the dump, wearing a lifejacket and was filmed. I found the above practices really humiliating for those refugees; I managed to speak in English with the refugee who was filmed before and was now watching the filming. He told me that these people were reporters from the USA, who had paid them to say a few things about their journey and to also pretend that they had just arrived. “I don’t like what I am doing, but they are paying us really well”, he told me. As I discuss in my thesis these are just some of many more examples of refugees’ objectification, which frequently made me feel angry or even disgusted.

Other incidents invoked memories from the period between 2008-2013 when I was frequently intimidated, as a human rights lawyer, by the police (see chapter 2). In particular, on 29 September 2018, I attended a press conference in Mytilene concerning racism and fake news. At some point I went out of the building where the conference was taking place, in order to buy a cup of coffee. I noticed that undercover police were taking pictures of me. Their chief-inspector was also there, and we knew each other from the past, when I was working as a lawyer. We said hello to each other, and I then told him: “You have taken so many pictures of me in the past, why are you doing this again? He cynically replied, “Dimos you are very experienced, and you shouldn’t ask me this question; you know very well how things work; don’t worry about the pictures”. To an extent, I thought afterwards, he was right; before starting with my fieldwork I was aware that there was a possibility to come across incidents like the above-mentioned. However, such incidents will always make me feel frustrated or even intimidated.

It was also sad to observe that many members of local grassroots movements and NGOs were traumatised or even burnt out (chapter 2), as a result of their everyday experiences on Lesbos. What I was not expecting and made me feel uncomfortable and sceptical was the

stance of some of my acquaintances and former colleagues whom I interviewed. These people used to be a part of former radical local initiatives and as I explain in chapter 4, they had now been separated into different groups and each group had established a different NGO. I was surprised to listen to them during our interviews blaming or even accusing each other, for various reasons ranging from issues of transparency or misappropriation of funds, silencing, hierarchical relations and authoritative behaviour. This was one of the most disappointing findings during my fieldwork and while I was separately interviewing them I found myself in a difficult position both as a former member of these networks and as a researcher. As I further explain in my thesis, this was also one of the indicators of how previous forms of social cohesion on Lesvos have been disrupted.

Before starting with my fieldwork, I was aware that the psychological impact of conducting research on Lesvos would be frequently intense. Elmir et al. (2011, p. 15) recognise the difficulty of taking emotional distance by acknowledging that, “researching in sensitive areas has the potential to pose a threat to researcher’s well-being, particularly if they have strong feelings or have lived experiences of the phenomena under investigation”. Consequently, before starting with my fieldwork, I tried to be emotionally and psychologically prepared of what I would come across. Furthermore, throughout my work as a lawyer I have attended several training workshops on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), burn-out and traumatisation. Therefore, I was aware of how to acknowledge PTSD symptoms and treat them. Moreover, because of my professional background, I am also very experienced in interviewing people, even “vulnerable” ones, and thus, capable in managing emotions in order to avoid potential traumatisation or burnout. Following Elmir’s et al. suggestion of the importance of “debriefing”, I took enough time between interviews and observations and I discussed any distress that came up both with my supervisors and people I trust. During weekends I was also trying to take some distance from the field and go to my village on Lesvos, where my family and some of my dearest friends live. This practice proved to be beneficial in handling and overcoming the emotional risk, which is overwhelming when one researches sensitive topics.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I outlined the methodology I used to address my research questions, I referred to challenges that I encountered during my fieldwork and provided a number of reflections concerning ethics and positionality. I also explained the ways in which I collected and analysed my empirical data. The following four chapters offer the outcomes of this analysis.

I used multiple methods or triangulation in order to secure an in-depth understanding of the various interactions among different actors on Lesbos. As I explained, my ethnographic research approach included observation, semi-structured interviews and an analysis of documentary sources. These research tools are simultaneously used in the following four substantial chapters. The only exception is chapter 3: *The border regime as a state of exception*, where I am mainly conducting an informed legal analysis of official documentary sources.

Chapter 2: A “crisis within a crisis”

Introduction

In this chapter I focus on the contemporary socio-political reality in Greece by exploring the “refugee crisis” as a crisis within the Greek “financial crisis”. Even though the refugee crisis and its aftermath is the main temporal period that my research is focusing on, its characteristics and its consequences on local populations’ everyday lives cannot be isolated from Greece’s most recent economic, social and political turmoil. The 2015 refugee arrivals coincided with the Greek state’s economic downturn, which had started in 2010. Specifically, when the global financial downturn hit Europe in 2008, Greece was affected as it was no longer able to repay its loans and faced with the prospect of default (Pappas, 2013, p. 31). The likelihood of Greece defaulting on its debt, combined with pre-existing alleged failings – including structural economic weaknesses, inefficiencies in public administration, its uneven development, corruption and political patronage (Mouzelis and Pagoulatos, 2002; Kioupkiolis, 2014, pp. 143–144; Sotiropoulos and Bourikos, 2014) – led from 2010 onwards to a series of “bailout” packages and into the biggest financial rescue of a bankrupt country in history (Varoufakis, 2018a). However, instead of “rescuing”, these “rescue” packages initiated an “oligarchic regime” (Kioupkiolis, 2014, p. 143) and a “state of exception” (Agamben, 2005), which dramatically changed the everyday lives of Greek people. Cuts to salaries, pensions and essential state services that resulted from the financial crisis led to a “humanitarian crisis”, as many called it (Christodoulou and Christodoulou, 2013; Matsaganis, 2013; Sotiropoulos and Bourikos, 2014; Kalantzis, 2016). In particular, the austerity measures that were enforced worsened standards of living, led to destitution and loss of income and property, the deterioration of public health, and increased homelessness and suicides, which reached record highs (Ibid.). As Vicki Squire (2018, p. 117) observes the conditions within Greece over recent years have been marked by a situation in which those who “weren’t expecting it” faced rapid devaluation of their lives in the face of a spiralling “financial crisis.”

As I argue in this chapter, the consequences of the enduring financial crisis were amplified during the years of the refugee crisis, which found the Greek society within a pre-existing crisis. This pre-existing crisis had a negative impact not only on Greek citizens but also on the efficient reception and management of refugees arriving to Greece and paved the way for the intervention of external actors (chapter 4) during the years of the refugee crisis. Furthermore, the financial crisis, which was about the “failed” Greek state (Pappas, 2011),

set the conditions for the 2015 exceptional border functions (chapter 3) to be usurped by various external intervening actors. According to De Genova and Tazzioli (2016),

[...] among the countless criticisms of fiscal “irresponsibility” levelled against Greece (which was severely debilitated by EU austerity policies), it is crucial to recall the allegation regarding the Greek state’s apparent incapacity to “manage” the influx of an estimated three quarters of a million refugees and migrants who arrived on its shores in 2015 alone, leading to threats to suspend Greece’s inclusion in the Schengen zone, unless it overhauls its response to the migration crisis.

In chapters 3 and 5, I further discuss the extent to which the enforcement of various exceptional policies entailed threats and coercion against Greece by the intervening actors. In this chapter I focus on the notion of the “crisis within the crisis” and its consequences on local populations’ everyday lives. In section 1, I clarify how I am engaging with the term “crisis”. In doing so I seek to unravel the notion of crisis in a way that makes it more “legible, precise and applicable as a tool of analysis” (Bayırbağ, Davies and Münch, 2017, p. 2024). In addition, as Roitman points out (in Bayırbağ, Davies and Münch, 2017, p. 2025),

[...] a nuanced reading of crisis would open the door to a better appreciation not only of how urban economies, politics and societies break down, recompose and transform, but also how political normalcy and inertia become entrenched even in the face of economic disasters, grievous suffering and heroic resistance.

In section 2, I argue that the refugee crisis was not an unforeseen phenomenon and unfolds as a crisis within the Greek financial crisis; these two crises are intertwined and intersect and are both characterised by the enforcement of enduring exceptional policies and the intervention of multiple actors. As I argue these Greek crises have also produced multiple shocks for the Greek people. In section 3, I move to a more localised discussion of the “crisis within a crisis” by focussing on Lesbos’ local populations, in order to explore the enduring consequences that the “crisis within the crisis” has for their everyday lives.

1. The notion of “crisis”

During the last decade there has been a proliferation in public, academic and political discourse of the term “crisis” (Koselleck and Richter, 2006; Klein, 2007; Clarke, 2010; Agamben, 2013; Roitman, 2014; Albahari, 2015b; De Genova, 2016; De Genova and Tazzioli, 2016; Bayırbağ, Davies and Münch, 2017; Hess and Kasperek, 2017b). Clarke (2010, p. 342) observes that “the word crisis has been everywhere”. The concept has become a catchword of politics (Koselleck and Richter, 2006, p. 358), and routine in peoples’ everyday lives. From 2010 onwards I have experienced myself, when I was a resident in Greece, the overuse of the concept of “crisis” by the mass media, politicians, and non-governmental actors to such an extent that crisis has become a banality, a common topic of conversation among Greek people.

Janet Roitman (2014, p. 4), notes that the term “crisis” is commonly used to denote a situation of disruption of the norm within a prior situation of presumed stability, and is thereby associated with imminent danger demanding immediate action. The word crisis (*κρίσις*) has its roots in the Greek verb ‘krino’ (*κρίνω*). In classical Greece, it meant not only to ‘divorce’ and ‘quarrel’, but also ‘decision’, in the sense of reaching a verdict or judgment. Reinhart Koselleck and Michaela Richter (2006, p. 358) offer a genealogy of the term ‘crisis’, by stressing that:

For the Greeks the term ‘crisis’ had relatively clearly demarcated in the spheres of law, medicine, and theology. The concept imposed choices between stark alternatives – right or wrong, salvation or damnation, death. Until the early modern period the medical meaning, which continued to be used technically, remained dominant [...]. From the seventeenth century on, the term, used as a metaphor, expanded into politics, economics, history, psychology [...]. Because of its metaphorical flexibility the concept [...] enters into everyday language; [...]. In our century, there is virtually no area of life that has not been examined and interpreted through this concept with its inherent demand for decisions and choices.

David Harvey (2014, p. ix) argues that crises are essential to the reproduction of capitalism. He notes that, “it is in the course of crises that the instabilities of capitalism are confronted, reshaped and re-engineered to create a new version of what capitalism is about”. There are

also arguments suggesting that crisis can be a chance for a radical reorganisation of an existing order. As De Genova and Tazzioli (2016, p. 11) note, “crisis” always signals “opportunity”, but it is important to ask: “What “crisis? Whose “crisis? Who gains, and who loses”, from the labelling of a conjuncture as “crisis”?

The proliferation of “crisis” and the aims and interests that its use serves have received considerable criticisms. These mainly focus on the observation that “crisis” has become an instrument of power that lasts indefinitely and serves to legitimise political and economic decisions that in fact deprive citizens of the possibility of decision (Agamben, 2013, also see chapter 3). As Kioupkiolis (2014, pp. 146–147) explains, this mode of rule violates standard operating procedures of democracy and eliminates residues of democratic substance, evincing almost no concern for popular consent and democratic legitimation (chapter 3). He also notes that governance, as a result of crisis, is often entrusted to unelected technocrats who turn government into “expert administration” and political authority becomes subordinate to international centres of power and economic force (Ibid. p. 147). Agamben (2013), during an interview in 2013, argued that the present understanding of crisis refers to an enduring state, incompatible with democracy, and this uncertainty is extended into the future, indefinitely:

[...] It is exactly the same with the theological sense; the Last Judgement was inseparable from the end of time. Today, however, judgement is divorced from the idea of resolution and repeatedly postponed. So, the prospect of a decision is ever less, and an endless process of decision never concludes [...]. We must start by restoring the original meaning of the word “crisis”, as a moment of judgement and choice [...]. We cannot postpone this to the indefinite future.

De Sousa Santos (2017, p. 250) observes that whenever we have a crisis, we have to explain the crisis in order to restore the system back to normal. However, it becomes problematic when the crisis becomes permanent. In that case, he argues,

an insidious and invisible twist occurs: rather than calling for an explanation, the crisis is used to explain everything. In social sciences, we say that the crisis ceases to be a dependent variable and becomes an independent variable. The government cuts salaries and

pensions because of the crisis. It privatizes the system of pensions because of the crisis [...]. So, instead of being explained, the crisis explains everything.

Roitman (2014, p. 5), in a similar way to De Sousa Santos, cautions that, “through the term crisis, the singularity of events is abstracted by a generic logic, making crisis a term that seems self-explanatory.” She observes that it is therefore instructive to recall the political uses that “crisis” may be pressed to serve. Labelling a complex situation – such as that of mass migration – as a “crisis” and therefore as “exceptional” tends to conceal the violence and permanent exception that are the norm under global capitalism and global geo-politics and may serve to perpetuate the conditions that have led to the purported “emergency” in the first place. As a result, the concept of emergency within a “crisis” acquires a central meaning because it serves to legitimise a permanent enforcement of exceptional measures and policies (chapter 3), as well as an enduring intervention of external actors (chapter 4), who have to take control of the situation. As I show in chapter 4, many of the intervening actors on Lesbos ‘push’ crisis by enabling the implementation of emergency and exceptional policies. Maurizio Albahari (2015a, p. 13) notes that, “emergencies serve as a political technique that bypasses and makes exceptional what would need to be thoroughly, more deliberatively addressed via democratic methods” and, at the same time, emergencies methodically put off to a never attainable future the analysis of the conditions that enable them. Mark Duffield (2007, p. 33) stresses that, like all states of exception, permanent emergencies “challenge existing laws, override social constraints and question political limits”. As a result, the notion of permanent emergency is deeply intertwined with the notion of crisis and, at the same time, with the notion of the “state of exception”, that I will further elaborate in the next chapter.

Finally, it is important to mention that the notion of crisis is not only mobilised by most of the powerful actors as a hegemonic strategy to enable certain forms of intervention. As I noticed during my fieldwork, smaller community organisations, local authorities or local individuals on Lesbos frequently invoked the idea of crisis. Regarding the refugee crisis and based on the fact that things on the ground continue to be quite difficult local populations experienced this situation as precisely a “crisis” and demanded the intervention of Europe. As a local politician characteristically told me, “the refugee crisis is a European problem, it has to do with the European borders and Europe had the obligation to intervene”. However, as I also noticed, the way that local populations used the term “crisis” was different from the way it was deployed by some of the intervening actors and policy makers. Locals who were

directly experiencing the consequences of the crisis were demanding stark solutions, instead of endorsing an enduring emergency response. For locals, crisis was what Agamben (2013) frames as “a moment of judgement and choice” that could not be postponed to the indefinite future. “The consequences of the crisis on our everyday lives are devastating and a solution has to be found immediately”, Tasos, a president of one of Lesvos’ villages characteristically told me. In the next section I will shed more light on some of the basic characteristics of the Greek “crises” and on how they intersect.

2. The Greek “crises”

There are different terms being used by various actors for the two types of “crisis” at the heart of this thesis: refugee, migration, or humanitarian crisis and financial, debt or economic crisis. Even though different interests among actors push them to use the term in different ways and for different reasons⁹, they all invoke the notion of crisis. Within my thesis I have decided to use the terms “refugee crisis” and “financial crisis”, because these are two of the most widely used terms by the mass media, humanitarian actors and policy makers (Dearden, 2015; ekathimerini.com, 2015; UNHCR, 2015; European Commission, 2016b; The Economist, 2018), when referring to the most recent Greek crises. Moreover, these terms are linked largely to the idea of the failed state, which fails to manage its economy, fails to police its borders, and consequently, needs to be ‘saved’ by external actors. Furthermore, during my fieldwork these were the terms being used by the vast majority of my interviewees, when referring to the crises commencing in Greece from 2010 onwards.

I thus deploy the term “financial crisis” to describe the temporal period commencing after 2010, when the first bailout program in Greece was enforced, involving the intervention of the European Commission (EC), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Central Bank (ECB), what is commonly known in Greece as the “Troika”. As I explained in the introduction of this thesis, by referring to the “refugee crisis” and its aftermath I am focusing on the temporal period from 2015 onwards, which was initially characterised by the large increases in border crossers arriving to Greece and particularly on Lesvos, followed by the intervention of numerous humanitarian and security actors and the enforcement of exceptional policies and measures.

⁹ For example, concerning the refugee crisis, some humanitarian (I)NGOs use the term ‘humanitarian’ or ‘human rights’ crisis (Human Rights Watch, 2019), in order to highlight the need for intervention, based on a responsibility to protect those who are suffering (chapter 4). Similarly, policymakers use the terms ‘migrant’ or ‘refugee’ crisis (Council of the European Union, 2016), in order to legitimise the enforcement of exceptional measures and policies for the management of refugee/migrant flows (chapter 3).

As I previously argued the financial and refugee crises are intertwined. Hall and Massey (2010) in commenting on the global economic crisis of 2008 argue that, although the “economic crisis” seems to start in the economy, with the collapse of the global financial system and the banks, any serious analysis of the crisis must take into account its other “conditions of existence”. As a result, even though the “refugee crisis” and its aftermath is the main temporal period that my research is focusing on, its “conditions of existence”, cannot be isolated from Greece’s most recent economic, social and political challenges. The discourses on the financial crisis, describing Greece as a ‘failed’ state, experiencing a humanitarian crisis, have been used as a device to allow certain border functions to be usurped, in order to internalise the EU borders (chapter 3) and to turn islands like Lesbos into securitised and “buffer zones” (Franko Aas, 2007). In the next two subsections, I describe in more detail some particular characteristics of the financial and refugee crises.

2.1 The “financial crisis”

From 2010 onwards the Greek people had been confronted by a harsh everyday reality, characterised by youth unemployment of over 50 percent, capital controls, decrease of family and business income, political instability and enduring severe, exceptional austerity measures (Matsaganis, 2013; Kalantzis, 2016; Varoufakis, 2018a).

The Greek “financial crisis” started in 2010 as a fiscal crisis, soon turned into a sovereign debt crisis, then altered into a full-blown recession (Varoufakis, 2018a). In 2012 a second bailout program followed, while in 2015, at the peak of the refugee crisis, capital controls were imposed with Greek banks remaining closed (BBC, 2015a). In August 2015 there was a third bailout. According to a report commissioned by the European Bank (2016):

With more than one in four individuals of working age unemployed and six consecutive years of negative annual economic growth from 2008 onwards, the economic crisis experienced in Greece has been deep and long-lasting. By the end of 2015, GDP had contracted by 26 per cent compared to 2008 levels; over the same period, total unemployment went up by 17.1 percentage points and youth unemployment increased by almost 28 percentage points to 49.8 per cent.

Despite pronouncements in August 2018 proclaiming the successful completion of the Greek financial rescue programmes (Inman, 2018), there are facts indicating that this is not the case. In August 2018, the academic and former finance minister of Greece Yanis Varoufakis (2018b) characterised the situation in Greece as “exceptional and never-ending” and claimed that Greece has turned into a “debtor’s prison”. He argued that although in August 2018 the third bailout package ended there is now a fourth such package that differs from the past three in two “unimportant” ways (Ibid.):

Instead of new loans, payments of €96.6bn that were due to begin in 2023 will be deferred until after 2032, when the monies must be repaid with interest on top of other large repayments previously scheduled. And, second, instead of calling it a fourth bailout, the EU has named it, triumphantly, the “end of the bailout”. Ridiculously high VAT and small business tax rates will, of course, continue, as will fresh pension cuts and new punitive income tax rates for the poorest that have been scheduled for 2019. The Greek government has also committed to maintaining a long-term budget surplus target, not counting debt repayments (3.5% of national income until 2021, and 2.2% during 2022-2060) that demands permanent austerity, a target that the IMF itself gives less than 6% probability of ever being attained by any Eurozone country.

As I highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, the demand of permanent austerity in Greece was founded on the discourse of the “dysfunctional” Greek “failed” state and its inability to re-pay its debts. Failed states, according to the definition provided by the Crisis States Research Centre of the London School of Economics (2019), can no longer reproduce the conditions of their own existence and, therefore, are under threat of imminent collapse. The notion of “failed state” has been widely applied to various African states (for a brief account of such examples see: Englebert and Tull, 2008), involving the reconstruction of public institutions, the reestablishment of political institutions, the provision of social services and economic recovery (Ibid. p. 106). However, the notion of “failed state” can be used as a way of legitimating continued or expanded interventions by prosperous states, which might not only fail (Stewart and Knaus, 2012; Woodward, 2017), but also often overlook the interests of the populations directly being affected by these interventions. As I argued, during the years of the financial crisis the intervening actors in Greece, instead of

recovering the Greek state's alleged failings, created an enduring suffocating environment for the Greek people, and most importantly, overlooked their voices. Decision-making processes have been entrusted to unelected technocrats and intervening actors and, as I argue in chapter 5, a neo-colonial context has been established in Greece. In the next subsection I focus on the refugee crisis and its aftermath, as an additional layer to the financial crisis' consequences. Against the language of crisis, I argue that this was an event that was neither unforeseen nor unpreventable.

2.2 The “refugee crisis”: An unforeseen and unpreventable event?

Similar to the “financial crisis” the large numbers of refugee arrivals in 2015 also generated various discourses and terms. The most common discourses focused on the notions of a “refugee”, or a “migration” crisis. Likewise, this same phenomenon has been depicted in terms of a “humanitarian crisis”, a “reception crisis”, a “crisis of the asylum system” and a “crisis of Europe's borders”, which is to say, a “crisis” of “border control”, a “crisis of the Schengen zone” or even a “crisis of democracy,” sometimes equated even with a “crisis of the idea of Europe” (De Genova and Tazzioli, 2016). The “refugee crisis” is also represented as a by-product of “the crisis in the Middle East”, a “Syrian crisis”, or a crisis of “the Arab world”, which are figured as the source of the refugee arrivals to Europe (Ibid). However, irrespective of the language being used for the notion of “crisis”, a question arising is: Were the 2015 mass migration flows an unforeseen and unpreventable event?

The 2015 refugee arrivals were not something new for Greece. Contemporary Greece has been a main gateway for border crossers since the 1990s, when hundreds of thousands of Albanians entered Greece, due to the collapse of the pyramid banking system in Albania (Dalakoglou, 2016). In the early 2000s Greece and particularly Lesbos have been a major gateway for refugees arriving from Asia and Africa (Lauth Bacas, 2010). During 2010, when I was working at the infamous *Pagani* detention centre on Lesbos, refugees arrived on a daily basis and the living conditions in the detention centre were appalling. The Deputy Minister for Public Order had visited Lesbos and claimed that Pagani was “worse than Dante's inferno” (Georgoulas and Sarantidis, 2013). Afterwards, from 2012 to 2013 the streets and squares of Mytilene were full of refugees sleeping rough. Despite the daily refugee arrivals and the terrible living conditions in reception and detention centres, the language of “crisis” was absent from daily discourses. In 2015, a sequence of events beginning with the record number of people who flowed into Greece and culminating in the photograph of drowned Syrian toddler Alan Kurdi “woke the world to the refugee crisis”

(Howden and Fotiadis, 2017). As Miriam Ticktin puts it (2016, p. 258) this photo “gave the ‘migrant crisis’ a new face: innocence. It shamed Europe into action”. So, crisis talk can have different effects, sometimes disciplinary, other times shaming (which can also be a form of disciplining).

The idea that what happened in 2015 was a “refugee crisis” was criticised by many of the activists that I spoke with during my fieldwork, as it implied a sudden rupture. “How can we speak about a ‘refugee crisis’, since we already knew, at least 2-3 years before 2015, that it was coming?”, Voula, a local activist characteristically told me. For most of those working in the field during 2012-2014, including myself, it was already well known that there were hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of refugees in Turkey, who were on “stand by” in order to cross the Aegean Sea to the Greek islands. We knew this from information and updates we were receiving from both our colleagues in Turkey and border crossers arriving to Lesbos during that period. Furthermore, as a lawyer experienced in refugee law I regularly participated in meetings and conversations with stakeholders, policy makers and politicians; they were all aware of this situation in Turkey.

Thus, as various scholars (Albahari, 2015b; Collyer and King, 2016; De Genova and Tazzioli, 2016) have argued, the 2015 refugee arrivals should not be seen as an unpredictable and unforeseen event and consequently as a “crisis”. They all agree that the notion of “crisis” has been abused in order for EU policymakers to legitimise emergent and exceptional policies in the name of humanitarianism and securitisation (chapter 3) but at the expense of refugees’ and, as I argue in the next section, of locals’ everyday lives. This exceptional response by the EU policymakers, which has been enabled through the intervention of multiple actors (chapter 4), also reveals the asymmetrical power relations between the EU and the Greek state and between the intervening actors and Lesbos’ local populations (chapter 5). De Genova (2016), by referring to the refugee crisis, speaks about a moment of governmental impasse, a “crisis” of territorially-defined state power over transnational, cross-border human mobility, which has been deployed as “crisis” for the reconfiguration of tactics and techniques of border control and immigration and asylum law enforcement. In addition, the crisis discourses on the “failed” Greek state, which was unable to deal with its own problems allowed various border practices to be usurped. The huge humanitarian intervention that took place during and in the aftermath of the refugee crisis enabled what Albahari (2016, p. 278) frames as, “a moral economy of salvation; a sovereign

humanitarianism [...] a way of doing nothing while pretending to fight trafficking and the lethality of the border”.

The above-described deliberate use of “crisis” language is related to the enforcement of an emerging “border regime” creating a suffocating environment for islanders (and refugees), a “state of exception” violating the rule of law (chapter 3) and establishing a colonial relation (chapter 5). The outcomes of these crises are profound for Lesbos’ local populations and have also produced multiple shocks for them.

2.3. The Greek crises as a “shock within a shock”

As many of my interlocutors commented during my fieldwork, the “crisis within the crisis” is also a “shock within a shock” and one shock after another for them.¹⁰ These “shocks” are an outcome of the exceptional measures and policies that accompanied the Greek crises. As Aris, a local activist mentioned,

During summer 2015 the situation with the mass refugee arrivals was a shock for everybody. However, we must not forget that during this summer we also had a referendum in Greece, basically concerning our presence within the EU, and simultaneously the enforcement of capital controls. These were parallel shocks for the Greek society. I can remember that during the propaganda that we were making at the central market of Mytilene (by distributing leaflets) for the ‘NO’ vote to prevail at the referendum, there were from the one side ‘caravans’ of refugees arriving from the North of the island and from the other side pensioners, old women and men queuing outside the banks, in order to withdraw the maximum amount of the 40 Euro that they were entitled to withdraw on a daily basis and cover their basic needs.

Similarly the spokesperson of UNHCR on Lesbos emphasised that:

We need to take into consideration that Greece and Lesbos were already in deep financial recession and crisis even before the refugee

¹⁰ In the previous section I argued that the refugee crisis was neither an unforeseen nor unpreventable event for practitioners working on the field and various state actors. For them, including myself, the refugee crisis was not something sudden and as a result it was not a shock. However, the refugee crisis was a shock for the vast majority of local populations, who were unaware of the fact that hundreds of thousands of refugees in Turkey were on “stand by” in order to cross the Aegean Sea to the Greek islands.

influx. So, people were already frustrated, desperate, and afraid of the future; we then had the refugee influx, and now 3 years later it is still unresolved. So, it is very normal that this frustration is building up, the patience of people is running out and they just want to take their lives back into their own hands; to receive a sense of normalcy, things to return as they were, after all these multiple shocks.

The multiple shocks that Greek people have been experiencing from 2010 onwards can be related to the “shock doctrine”, a concept developed by Naomi Klein (2007). Klein uses this concept to describe a deliberate technique or tool used by neoliberal external and internal elites to justify the deployment of exceptional/emergency measures without provoking citizens’ resistance. She argues that the “shock doctrine” is a brutal tactic which takes advantage of major crises and disorients the public by imposing a collective shock, a “shock therapy”, in order to push through repeated unpopular reforms, and quickly make those reforms permanent (Ibid. p. 6). The intervention of the “Troika”, the enduring enforcement of austerity measures and the privatisation of valuable assets during the Greek financial crisis serves as an illustrative example of such technics, which transformed Greece into a “debt colony” (Varoufakis, 2018a). As I further discuss in the next chapter, the enforcement of exceptional border policies violating the rule of law in terms of legitimisation and democratic accountability is a characteristic example of repeated unpopular emergency border policies which were initially introduced as temporary and gradually became permanent, by transforming Lesbos into an open prison. As I also discuss in the next chapter the systematic and repeated “shock therapy” (Klein, 2007) local populations of Lesbos have been experiencing from 2010 onwards was combined with an enduring state of fear, suggesting that any other alternative would be catastrophic. This combination restricted the spaces of resistance against the exceptional policies being enforced during the Greek crises. As Omiros, a local activist characteristically confessed to me: “After all these repeated shocks, I feel that I have become immunised and I do not react as I used to; watching refugees living in misery and pain does not affect me the way it used to some years ago”. In the next section I show how these multiple shocks, and in particular, the enduring financial and refugee “crises” are intertwined with each other and directly affect locals’ everyday lives.

3. A “crisis within a crisis”: Locals’ responses

The enduring “crisis within the crisis” and its impacts on locals’ everyday lives were profoundly visible during my fieldwork, both practically and symbolically. It became

obvious to me that these crises intersect and that uncertainty as a result of these crises has become a “widespread condition” (Squire, 2018, p. 117). When the refugee crisis was at its peak, Lesbos’ local community was already highly affected by the austerity measures of the past years. For example, in 2015, a quarter of Lesbos’ population (23,000) had been registered as beneficiaries of various municipal social aid programs such as soup kitchens, social solidarity clinics and food banks (Maravas, 2015).

When I started my fieldwork the number of stranded refugees on Lesbos, according to official statistics (Ministry of Digital Policy Telecommunications and Media, 2018), reached 10,967;¹¹ 8,827 of them were accommodated at Moria camp, while the rest were accommodated at the various reception facilities on the island. Many of my interviewees claimed that the number of stranded refugees on the island was even higher. Thekla, an experienced international organisation worker living on Lesbos for many years, argued that the official number is fictitious and that the real number is up to 20,000. “On the one hand”, she said, “the authorities cannot practically estimate the exact number, because refugees are not detained and thus they cannot count them; on the other hand, they do not want to refer to real numbers, in order not to cause panic and negative reactions by locals”. One of my interviewees who had access to the records of the asylum service described the chaotic situation regarding the number of asylum seekers on Lesbos; “there are hundreds of asylum seekers who are trapped here despite the fact that their applications have been rejected in a first and second instance. However, no one cares; I sometimes think that they will remain trapped for ever”.

From the very beginning of my fieldwork I witnessed the thousands of refugees on the streets, while Mytilene and some of the villages where the main camps are, were turned into an open prison for refugees (chapter 3). As Reza, an interpreter working for a Greek NGO, told me, “on this island refugees are free to live in a huge prison”. The vast majority of refugees on Lesbos are allowed to leave the physical premises of camps and have freedom of movement on the island. “They interact with locals and they have become a part of locals’ everyday lives; their acts and behaviours affect locals and vice versa”, Evi, an international organisation worker told me. Giorgos, a local professional, noted that “every street and neighbourhood in Mytilene has a house where refugees are accommodated”. A first impression for someone visiting Lesbos is refugees hanging around with their families in the

¹¹ Almost a year after, while writing this chapter, the official number of stranded refugees on Lesbos was even higher, approaching 20,000 (EmprosNet.gr, 2019).

streets, squares and parks of Mytilene. Also, when driving from Mytilene to the main camps one can see at the main streets groups of refugees walking, in order to go to Mytilene and then return back to the camps. Lora, an INGO representative, noted that, “there is a big demographic change on Lesbos; 30,000 locals in Mytilene plus 10,000 refugees creates a huge problem for local infrastructures and public services”.

In the next subsections I discuss the implications that the “crisis within the crisis” has for Lesbos’ local population as a whole, meaning irrespective of the category (e.g. civil society, local authorities, private sector) that the locals are part of. As I show, despite the fact that the refugee crisis has boosted the local economy to an extent, and has also turned Lesbos into a multicultural society, which is seen as something positive by many people, it is also an additional burden for locals adding to the financial crisis’ impacts. In subsections 3.6 – 3.9, I explore how the “crisis within the crisis” affects specific categories of Lesbos’ local populations.

3.1 The VAT discount and the “objectification” of refugees

The Greek government has acknowledged, to an extent, the difficult situation that local populations of the Aegean islands have been enduring. To that end, in summer 2018, after a summit of the European Union leaders in Brussels (Georgiopolou, 2019), the Greek Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras, connected the refugee crisis with the Greek financial crisis and particularly with the special value-added tax (VAT) increase which was one of the commitments that Greece undertook to exit the bailout era. In Tsipras’ words, “I had called on the need not to increase the VAT on the five islands as a minimum sign of solidarity to the burden that they carry” (GTP Headlines, 2018). He said that the special VAT regime, that the Greek islands had been entitled to in the past years, would be valid for as long as the refugee crisis lasts; “they will both last long and therefore the VAT will not increase” (Ibid.). As a result, a legislative act and a ministerial decision were published by the Greek state regarding the islands of Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Leros and Kos, declaring that these islands would continue to enjoy a 30 percent discount on all VAT rates.

However, connecting VAT discount with the refugee crisis led to negative reactions by local authorities. The islands’ mayors and local officials denounced as “unacceptable and immoral” the government’s decision to link the lower VAT rate to refugee numbers on the islands. “What are we going to do if the numbers don’t add up? Borrow refugees from other islands?” (Georgiopolou, 2019), one local authority official said. In addition, correlating

Greece's financial commitments with the refugee crisis and defining refugees as a burden comparable to taxation amounts to an objectification of refugees by both the Greek state and the EU, which accepted this logic. Objectification can be defined as seeing and/or treating a person as an object (Papadaki, 2010). Martha Nussbaum (1995, p. 257) identifies several features of objectification, including "instrumentality", or the treatment of a person as a tool for the objectifier's purposes. A second feature is fungibility, which means that the objectifier treats the object as interchangeable (a) with other objects of the same type, and/or (b) with objects of other types. The notions of instrumentality and objectification were also profound in relation to humanitarian actors' practices towards refugees on Lesbos, an issue which I further discuss in chapter 4. In any case, the special VAT regime, as a result of the crisis within the crisis, undoubtedly had a positive economic impact on the everyday lives of Lesbos' local community. As I argue in subsections 3.6 and 3.9 there were some further positive economic consequences regarding local unemployed people and local businesses. However, the consequences of the "crisis within the crisis" should not be only explored in economic terms, but also by considering their impact on local populations' psychological wellbeing.

3.2 Local populations' psychological wellbeing

Many of my interviewees referred to the negative impact that "the crisis within the crisis" has had on their psychological wellbeing. Ioanis, an NGO representative, mentioned that, "once you decide to get out from your home the first thing you come across is misery". Sofoklis, a local volunteer, noted that "it is easy to get used to peoples' distress and suffering" and Sokratis, a local professional, pointed out that "it is a huge burden to witness everyday refugees in distress passing by outside of my shop and me being unable to do something". Evi, a former colleague from Mytilene, highlighted the psychological impact that this situation has had on aid workers;

I return back home from the camp and I feel like a 'zero'; I start eating until I get to sleep and as you can see I have now become overweight. Refugees are telling us that we are not doing anything to help them and I know that this is true to some extent; this makes me feel very sad and depressed.

Furthermore, witnessing the everyday violence and social harm refugees are experiencing on Lesbos (Iliadou, 2019b) also has a considerable psychological impact for those who assist

refugees as volunteers and activists (also see section 3.7). As Maria, a local volunteer, mentioned:

For so many years now I am witnessing these injustices taking place against refugees and it feels like a hand is squeezing my heart. It is very hard to emotionally manage this human suffering and if one feels empathy for refugees the stress caused is unbearable. In the beginning my colleagues and I were optimistic, but three years later many of us have emotionally collapsed.

Equally unbearable is the emotional distress caused to locals who have witnessed tragic shipwrecks, leading to hundreds of border deaths and missing people (Iliadou, 2019b). In 2012, in the aftermath of a shipwreck that resulted in 28 deaths (Welcome 2 Lesbos, 2012), I had intervened in numerous ways as a lawyer and the memories of that period have traumatised me. Three years after, in October 2015, a ship carrying around 300 refugees sank near the north coasts of Lesbos, at Molyvos village. Locals had to deal with rescuing refugees and collecting the dead bodies of those who did not survive. As the president of Molyvos told me,

the whole village, young and old people, were helping during that night by any means; fishermen were rescuing people in the sea, the rest of us were on the shores providing clothes, blankets, first aid etc. You could listen to people screaming and crying; none of us will ever forget these tragic moments.

During the financial crisis unemployment, debt and worsened standards of living, as well as poor health and educational standards have led many Greek people to poor mental health, depression and thousands of suicides (Christodoulou and Christodoulou, 2013, p. 279). The above described psychological burden that local populations encounter, as a result of the EU's border policies, becomes an additional burden to the financial crisis' consequences on people's mental health. As I also explain in subsection 3.8, the increase of the overall population on Lesbos, due to the thousands of refugees stranded on the island, has deteriorated access to various public services, including mental health services. In the next subsection I further explore why many of the refugees stranded on Lesbos are frequently

blamed by locals for being delinquent, a situation that causes uncertainty, anxiety and even anger for many locals.

3.3 Delinquency as a result of border policies and locals' responses

During my fieldwork I regularly heard locals speaking about incidents of refugees' delinquent behaviour and acts, frequently without considering how and why such behaviour/acts are produced. Cases of petty theft against locals have risen significantly as have cases of burglaries and fights among refugees from different nationalities. While I was waiting outside a café for one of my interviewees to come, I witnessed a refugee who tried to steal a bag from an old man. Passersby intervened, they surrounded the refugee, and then called the police. I also witnessed several times the police stopping, searching and sometimes arresting refugees on the streets of Mytilene. Also, as I discussed with some of my interlocutors, cases of minor drug offences and of women and unaccompanied minors engaging in survival sex,¹² were very frequent. During night-time I was shocked to observe unaccompanied minors sitting at a central park of Mytilene and old men staring at them, while both the NGO accommodating these children and the local authorities were absent. "This is an everyday phenomenon", Thekla, a local activist, told me. Similarly, on the main street from Moria camp to Kalloni I witnessed, while I was passing by in my car, African women engaging in survival sex. "They are doing this for 5 Euro", Thanos, one of my interviewees told me.

All the above incidents are not only an additional burden for locals' psychological wellbeing but they also cause uncertainty, anxiety and anger. "Criminality on Lesbos was never so high", Takis, a hotel owner argued; "migrants are stealing from shops every day, you see them selling drugs in front of your kids' eyes, you see them holding knives and stabbing each other". Especially, regarding Moria, the president of the village mentioned:

There are many refugees who go to our allotments and they return back to the camp with their bags full of vegetables and fruits. Some others burn our olive trees, because during winter they are freezing at the camp. There was a period of time that they were killing at least 15 sheep per day for food, I have photos and videos to prove this.

¹² Survival sex is prostitution engaged in by a person because of their extreme need. It describes the practice of people who are homeless or otherwise disadvantaged in society, trading sex for food, a place to sleep, other basic needs, or for drugs (Flowers, 2010, pp. 110–112).

Eutihia, a member of Moria's village cultural association emphasised that, "our everyday lives are no longer normal; some years ago I used to go walking alone every day, but now I am afraid". Another woman from Moria's cultural association complained because she could not even hang her clothes on a drying rack. "Some refugees are stealing even our clothes". When I visited one of Moria's cafes (*Kafeneio*) people told me that they have enclosed their houses with wires and fences, in order to protect their properties.

What I found interesting was that a lot of locals were blaming the refugees for this situation. As Aris, a local activist, pointed out, "our everyday lives have changed and many people cannot get used to it; they adopt defensive mechanisms against this situation, because this sudden change is a shock for them". However, as Aris also commented, "many of these locals blaming refugees do not consider that these deviant acts are a product of the EU border policies". It is thus important to explore how delinquent or criminal behaviour/ acts are produced. As Markela, an INGO representative pointed out, "the thousands of refugees on Lesvos have no ability to work, no ability to integrate into society and are excluded politically, economically and socially; they do not have the ability to live a normal life here." Even though refugees on Lesvos are entitled to a monthly allowance ranging from 90-130 Euro, this amount of money cannot even cover their basic needs. Most of them are also entitled to accommodation, but the island's main camp has been characterised as "the worst refugee camp on earth" (BBC News, 2018). As critical criminologists who examine the genesis of crime would correctly argue, such deviant behaviours and acts are products of social inequalities and indifference perpetuated by state actors towards disadvantaged and marginalised individuals or groups of people (Lea and Young, 1984; Meyer, 2014). As they would also argue (Jarjoura, Triplett and Brinker, 2002), poverty and delinquency are related, because those who experience long periods of poverty are more likely to engage in both property and violent offending. However, the failure or denial by many locals to understand the reason why delinquency has escalated on Lesvos has led many of them to react against refugees instead of the policies that give birth to delinquency. This tendency has led to racist and xenophobic narratives as well as a division of locals between those who are receptive and those who are hostile towards refugees. In the next subsection I further discuss these issues.

3.4 Racism, xenophobia and social cohesion

Racism and xenophobia are not new phenomena on Lesvos. I have first-hand experiences as a local and I can recall various incidents taking place before 2015. For instance, in 2012

members of the Nazi party ‘Golden Dawn’ wrote hate slogans on the walls of my house, because I was representing asylum seekers as a lawyer. Yet even before arriving on Lesbos for my fieldwork, I was already aware that there was an escalation of xenophobia and racism, following Skype conversations that I regularly had with acquaintances from Lesbos and by constantly reading the local press. So, I extensively discussed with many of my interlocutors the most recent xenophobic and racist incidents that had taken place in 2018. What follows are some of the incidents described by my interlocutors.

During March 2018 some locals erected a large metallic cross at *Apeli*, a beach near Mytilene, in order to demonstrate their “Greek Christian Orthodox” background and to deter Muslims from swimming towards the shore. On 22 April 2018, a large-scale racist pogrom against Afghan refugees, including children, who had occupied “Sapfous” Square at Mytilene protesting against their prolonged stay on Lesbos, resulted in many of the refugees having to seek hospital treatment. As Stratis, a local activist told me: “During that night extreme racist slogans were heard by locals, such as ‘burn them alive’; they were throwing stones and Molotov bombs at refugees and their kids, with the police doing nothing”. In June, an announcement by Lesbos municipality, at the entrance of the beach “Tsamakia” in Mytilene, required nationals of non-Schengen countries to show their passports in order to enter the beach. On 10 July, a 78 years old farmer shot and injured a 16-year-old Syrian who tried to seek sanctuary with his family on the farmer’s land, resulting in more violence erupting in Moria camp. In August, locals from Gera, a region in the south-east of Lesbos, organised “patrol groups” to check houses looking at whether asylum-seekers had been transferred there. A few days later a monument erected by locals and dedicated to refugees who perished at sea was also destroyed by a far-right group called “Krypteia”.

The escalation of such phenomena was also clear from the first days when I arrived on Lesbos. On 6 September 2018, a nine-year-old girl from Greece was attacked by four men, because she was wearing a scarf on her head and they thought she was Muslim. On 17 September, the majority of Lesbos Association of Secondary State School Teachers Board (ELME) decided to favour the use of the term “lathrometanastis”¹³ by teachers in the schools of the island. On 29 September, I attended a press conference in Mytilene, on racism and fake news, organised by the Aegean Journalists’ Association. The journalists alleged

¹³ “Lathrometanastis” (λαθρομετανάστης) is a belittling, offensive and racist term, which is widely used in Greece when referring to people who cross borders irregularly. Etymologically, the term refers to goods, rather than humans.

numerous instances of being threatened by far-right groups for their coverage of refugee issues.

During the above conference it was also remarkable to hear a former Minister of Justice and current member of the Greek parliament suggesting that those arriving on Lesbos are not refugees but economic migrants and they should thus be deported. As a local activist, Mitsos, told me; “This is a widely reproduced narrative on Lesbos due to ignorance but also due to local micro-political reasons. The opposition politicians are aware of locals’ anger and they want to take advantage of it”. This narrative, which introduces a hierarchy between deserving and undeserving people, was also reproduced by the local press; every single article that I have read during the past five years distinguishes border crossers between refugees and economic migrants. Furthermore, a lot of the human rights workers that I spoke with were adopting this categorisation. This separation of people is also promoted by the border regime policies. Moria camp, a product of the border regime (chapter 3), serves as a filtering mechanism at the moment of arrival with the authorities doing the sorting of border crossers into bureaucratic and legal “categories” (Iliadou, 2019b), like economic migrant, asylum seeker, vulnerable and non-vulnerable and thus deportable and non-deportable. All of the above narratives by politicians, policy makers, the media and humanitarian organisations are so widely reproduced that they are also inevitably adopted by some of the local populations. Based on the conversations that I had with various locals, the narrative that “those arriving are not refugees”, seems very common. As a local stakeholder told me, “during 2015 those arriving were Syrians, they were refugees! Those arriving now are from countries like Afghanistan, Tunisia and Egypt, they are ‘lathrometanastes’, and must be deported”.

The contrast between deserving and undeserving people, and the suggestion that most of the border crossers arriving on Lesbos are not entitled to refugee status, and are thus undeserving, also relates to the notion of xenophobia. According to Nell (2009, p. 234), reasons for xenophobic intolerance often focus on three types of factors: (i) interactive factors related to the amount of exposure inhabitants have to strangers, (ii) cultural factors which include identity and nationalism and (iii) material or economic factors related to employment opportunities, available resources, etc. All these factors are at play in the case of Lesbos. The sudden transformation of Lesbos into an open prison has forced locals and refugees to coexist and interact daily and thus to be “exposed” to each other. Especially, incidents of delinquent acts/ behaviours make this interaction even harder. In addition, many locals also identify refugees as a threat to the Greek orthodox religion, to Greek civilisation,

and thus, a national threat. “In a few years Muslims will marry our kids and we must then forget Greece as we knew it”, a local professional characteristically told me. Eresios, a local official, argued that “apart from the financial and refugee crises, we also have a national crisis, due to the settlement of migrants on the island; some of them will remain here for ever and alter our culture”.

Many locals perceived refugees as “uncivilised”. During conversations that I had with Mytilene shop owners the narrative of uncivilised migrants was quite common. “Different ethnic groups of refugees frequently fight each other, and this makes locals argue that this is a part of their culture”, Thekla a local activist told me. A vice mayor of Lesvos mentioned that “refugees are spreading their rubbish everywhere and this is a part of their culture”. Furthermore, the financial crisis, which has left many people in destitution, is an additional factor that makes locals adopt xenophobic narratives. For instance, Zan, a local activist, commented: “You have so many locals suffering from the financial crisis and, at the same time, they watch refugees receiving benefits; they thus feel disadvantaged in their own country and they blame refugees for this”. Periklis, a president of a village, argued that, “many locals are already too tired after so many years of experiencing austerity and the refugees are an ideal scapegoat for them”.

However, there are also counternarratives articulated by those supporting refugees or who have a different ideological stance. For some of the people that I interviewed the coexistence of locals and refugees was an opportunity for them to live in a more open and “multicultural” society. “Lesvos became a ‘cosmopolitan centre’, in a way it is like living in London”, Aris, a local activist half-jokingly told me. Eirini, a local NGO worker described Mytilene as being,

a very conservative place, creating a suffocating environment for many of the people that I know and for myself too; but now you can see different skin colours, multicolour African clothes, you come across different cultures and religions, you listen to different languages etc. This overall picture creates a kind of a mosaic in Mytilene, which is something that was missing and this variety makes me feel more free and comfortable.

Similarly, Panagitsa, a local volunteer pointed out that “we are learning to coexist with different cultures by sharing experiences with them. There are cultural events happening and people from different countries, including refugees and activists, come together to share knowledge and good practices”.

The conflict between these diverse points of view is challenging social cohesion¹⁴ on Lesbos by creating parallel communities which are living alongside but not with one another. Local populations have become divided, a phenomenon which is rather new for the small community of Lesbos. A disruption of social cohesion was also observed in the years of the financial crisis and particularly during the 2015 referendum, when Greeks had to decide whether they should accept the bailout conditions during the country's financial crisis. During that period public opinion was highly polarised (Traynor, Hooper and Smith, 2015) and social cohesion was challenged to an extent. Nevertheless, this polarisation lasted for a few months, in contrast with the enduring disputes among locals on the refugee issue. As a former colleague told me, “the situation on Lesbos has become explosive” and Sylvia, a local NGO worker, emphasised that “modesty and temperance have been lost and even people who used to be ‘democratic’ and quite open-minded have now become xenophobic”. Voula, a local activist, mentioned that during the pogrom at Sappho Square she heard one of the perpetrators saying, “now we know the faces of those who support refugees”. “We were very few”, she told me, “and we got stigmatised”. The representative of Lesbos’ merchants argued that the “refugee crisis has brought to the surface extreme points of view, that were pre-existing but were in a ‘sleeping mode’ and have now awoken”. Mary, a local activist, referred to a characteristic example showing how relations among locals have been altered: “We now select to which café, restaurant or shop we will go to as customers, depending on whether the owner is friendly or hostile towards refugees”. Evi, an international organisation worker, referred to the April 2018 racist incidents at Sappho Square and the use of violence against refugees and activists: “What happened was extreme, sad and scary and made me think how easy it is to return violence with violence; if we have reached this point we are finished as a community”.

The president of a village near Moria mentioned that “approximately 80% of the villagers are hostile to refugees, mainly due to their delinquent behaviours, but this has negative

¹⁴ Although there are different definitions and consequently conceptual approaches to “social cohesion”, the term generally refers to the extent of connectedness and solidarity among groups in society. It identifies two main dimensions: the sense of belonging of a community and the relationships among members within the community itself (Manca, 2014).

implications for their relations with other villagers who do not complain”. The president of Moria told me that the village has been ‘broken’ into three parts: “half of them have been negatively affected, because refugees are destroying their allotments or properties, around 30% have economic interests from the refugee issue and the rest are indifferent or are supportive to refugees”. As a result, there are frequent incidents when villagers are blaming one each other for their stance. Three interviewees from Molyvos village described to me in dramatic terms how the villagers literally “expelled” them from Molyvos and threatened them, because they were supporting refugees.

In 2020, while writing this chapter, the normalisation and routinisation of the exceptional border policies produced even more racism and xenophobia. There were many cases when locals have taken the law into their own hands by verbally and physically attacking not only refugees but also volunteers and NGO workers (Balaskas, 2020b), including international and local working staff. This situation has generated even more tensions among locals and has further disrupted social cohesion on Lesbos. In the next section I refer to another significant implication of the border regime on Lesbos, namely the environmental degradation of the island.

3.5 The environmental degradation of Lesbos

The environmental degradation of Lesbos is an issue which has not yet received much attention. It is mainly an outcome of first, the disposal of huge amounts of plastic on Lesbos’ shores and, second, the increased production of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW). As Skanavis and Kounani (2016, p. 5) found during their research on Lesbos, a major environmental problem arising relates to the disposal of plastic from border crossers’ life jackets and inflatable crafts. Ignatis, the president of one of the North villages of Lesbos, characteristically told me that “the colour of North Lesbos’ shores had turned into orange and black, due to the thousands of lifejackets and boats disposed there”. As I witnessed myself these traces, three years after the peak of the refugee crisis, were still visible. During the period between 2015-2016 nearly a million lifejackets were discarded on Lesbos’ coasts and later on deposited in the “life vest graveyard”, as the municipal dump is now called. As Gillespie points out (2018, p. 149), “the mountainous heaps of jackets is a poignant symbol of human and environmental degradation”. The president of Molyvos, by referring to the “lifejackets graveyard” told me that a solution has to be found, because “all that waste is a threat for the aquifer that supplies the entire area with water”.

Equally problematic is the increased production of MSW, due to the number of refugees who remain stranded on the island, as well as the thousands of (I)NGO staff, journalists, researchers, volunteers and others. As Lesvos' vice-mayor of the municipal cleaning service explained:

The daily cost for MSW collection is huge and Lesvos' municipality do not always have the funding for increased waste collection due to the financial crisis; we are doing superhuman efforts to deal with the collection of all this waste. Even now the situation is very difficult, because migrants keep on arriving and there are also thousands living on the island.

During my fieldwork public health inspectors visited Moria camp and declared it “dangerous for public health and the environment” (Stubley, 2018). The inspectors found broken sewage pipes, overflowing garbage bins, stagnant water and flies in the toilets. A high risk of disease transmission due to overcrowding was also identified at the camp.¹⁵ The regional governor of North Aegean issued a notice to the Minister for Migration – which is typically responsible for Moria camp – and the Moria camp director, setting out a 30-day deadline for improvements (enikos.gr, 2018). Despite the fact that this situation did not change at all, there were no consequences after this deadline. When I visited Moria's cafes (*Kafenio*) and spoke with people there, I noticed that the villagers were anxious and angry due to this situation. A member of Moria's village cultural association highlighted that “the camps' sewage ends up into a stream, which is next to our village, we are afraid that we will get sick and infected”. Pavlos, an international NGO worker, was very worried about the environmental future of Lesvos:

All the waste which is produced is not recycled and this is disastrous. The island is a landmark for its beautiful beaches but also for its petrified forest and its olive trees around; it is also one of the best birdwatching locations in Europe; if we want to keep this, we need to do something with all that waste being produced.

The environmental impact that the border regime has had on Lesvos affects locals' psychological wellbeing too. “Locals see their beautiful island turned into a dump”, Thekla

¹⁵ Also see section 3.3 of the conclusion of this thesis on the spread of COVID-19.

told me. She also added that the environmental degradation of Lesvos also affects Lesvos' tourist industry "because no tourist wants to swim at beaches, which have traces of lifejackets". The environmental degradation of Lesvos is an additional reason for some locals to blame refugees for this situation. By considering that some other locals have a completely different point of view, this creates disputes and challenges social cohesion in similar ways that I have mentioned in the previous subsection.

Apart from the aforementioned impacts that the "crisis within the crisis" has had on Lesvos' populations as a whole, in the next four subsections I refer to its consequences on some of the distinct categories of local populations' that my research is focusing on: 1) Local unemployed people, 2) local civil society, 3) local authorities and public services and 4) private sector and local businesses.

3.6 Local unemployed people and "local" refugees

Why this sudden restlessness, this confusion?

(How serious people's faces have become.)

Why are the streets and squares emptying so rapidly,
everyone going home so lost in thought?

Because night has fallen and the barbarians have not come.

And some who have just returned from the border say
there are no barbarians any longer.

And now, what's going to happen to us without barbarians?

They were, those people, a kind of solution.

(Cavafys, 1904)

During my fieldwork, I frequently recalled the above extract from Constantinos P. Cavafy's poem, "Waiting for the Barbarians", written in 1904. It imprints an impression of resignation or even subordination of a society to an external solution that is clearly not an ideal one but is still "a kind of solution" for the people living in that society. As I show within different parts of my thesis this scenario became apparent in many instances during my fieldwork. In this subsection I explore to what extent the refugee crisis is a "kind of solution" for many locals who found themselves unemployed as a result of the financial crisis.

A symbolic and also pragmatic picture of the “crisis within the crisis” became apparent at an early stage of my fieldwork, when I visited Moria camp. I observed that outside the camp there were canteens and each canteen had tables and benches, where someone could sit down, relax and drink or eat something. I observed refugees sitting there and when I went closer I realised from their body language and the tone of their voices that they were discussing their problems and the situation there. One could also observe some of the people who were working in the camp having a break and drinking their coffee. One of my acquaintances, who was working in the camp and was sitting there with his colleagues, noticed my presence and invited me to join them. When I joined, they were already chatting and arguing in a rather intense way. All of them were formerly unemployed locals, middle aged people, who found a job at Moria camp through the Greek state’s employment programmes for unemployed people, which are called “community service”. As one of my interviewees, working for the Manpower Employment Organisation, the Greek “job centre” known as “OAED”, explained to me, these programmes offered full time jobs on short-term contracts (6-8 months), with the beneficiaries being mostly locals who became unemployed in the aftermath of the financial crisis. In order for someone to be eligible to apply they must meet specific social criteria, focusing on single parent families and/or families with a large number of children, personal income, while locality is also a benefit. The salary varies; for those aged younger than 25 years it is 410 Euro per calendar month, while for those older than 25 years the salary is 495 Euro.

All these workers were discussing how they could extend their contracts and establish a workers’ association. I was listening to them criticising the practices of other workers’ associations at Moria camp and discussing their plans of hiring lawyers so as to extend their contracts. As they were saying, “if we stop receiving these 400-500 Euro, our families will not survive”. Some others were suggesting that they should find a job with an NGO. “Many NGO workers earn five times more money than us!” Even more striking was the reassurance of one of these workers who said to his colleagues, “don’t worry, for as long as migrants’ arrivals continue, we will have a job and our contracts will be extended”. Similar narratives and discussions arose again and again throughout my fieldwork. For example, when I was visiting Parakoila during weekends, the village on Lesbos where I was born and raised, some of the unemployed residents asked me: “Do you have any information concerning the establishment of a camp in our area?” They were hoping that the establishment of a reception facility would be an opportunity for them to find a job. Similarly, many of my interviewees, who were working for NGOs confessed that their future survival depended on the refugee

issue. Giorgos, an NGO worker told me, “I am almost 40 years old and, although I am well educated, it was really hard for me to find a job in the aftermath of the financial crisis. The refugee crisis has given me the opportunity to find a good job. However, if I lose this job I have no other choice than living with my parents.”

The above dialogues and narratives bring to mind the concept of “*homo homini lupus*”, or “a man is wolf to man”, a Roman proverb by Plautus, which Thomas Hobbes later used in his Epistle Dedicatory of *De Cive* (see: Hobbes, 1998) to illustrate the brutish, anarchical condition of man in the state of nature (Rossello, 2012, p. 255). It has meaning in reference to situations when people are known to have behaved in a way comparable in nature to a wolf. The wolf as a creature is thought, in this example, to be predatory, cruel, and inhuman. The above-mentioned narratives show that the economic and social survival of people, who became unemployed in the aftermath of the financial crisis, is now dependent on the arrivals, and also the misery and discomfort surrounding the everyday lives of refugees on Lesbos. These workers at Moria camp chatting and arguing, projected the message to the refugees, who were sitting at the benches next to them, that “your death is my life”. Again, this is an instance of objectification of refugees. At the same time, the refugees and locals who were chatting at different tables in the same space about their worries, their lives and their future symbolically represented the “crisis within the crisis”.

An even more tragic representation of the “crisis within the crisis” arose from the conversations that I had with local refugees. As I mentioned (chapter 1), these refugees are a part of Lesbos’ local community, since they have lived there for a long period of time and have integrated in the local society. Some of them arrived in Lesbos 10-20 years ago as “irregular migrants” and subsequently had been detained for weeks or even months. As they told me, they are still carrying memories from that period of time and they are still having nightmares of crossing the Aegean Sea and afterwards being arrested and detained by the Greek authorities. The fact that most of them are employed as interpreters for (I)NGOs on Lesbos has serious effects on their psychological wellbeing. In the face of limited alternatives for many refugees to find a job, working for humanitarian organisations can be a “window of opportunity” (de Jong, 2018). These workers act as cultural brokers liaising, communicating and interpreting between service providers and their ethnic communities (Haggis, Schech and Rainbird, 2007). However, this type of employment also entails significant traps, including inadequate horizontal and vertical career mobility (de Jong, 2018, pp. 335–336). As I found, the lack of choices that these workers have in finding a job,

combined with their employment for a prolonged period of time for NGOs, has serious negative effects on them. “I enjoy helping asylum seekers from my own country, but I also have to listen to their stories and this brings sad memories from my own past”, Reza, an Afghan interpreter told me. As Navid mentioned,

[...] practically the only option that we have is to work as interpreters inside detention and reception facilities; you know, there is unemployment in Greece and for us, as refugees, it is extremely difficult to find a job anywhere else. The problem is that we are reliving the first time, when we arrived on the island! Thus, the psychological effect on us is enduring and intense.

Consequently, the refugee crisis has become a “kind of solution” (Cavafys, 1904) for many locals who became unemployed in the aftermath of the financial crisis. As Nikos Manavis (2018), a local journalist, points out, according to official data 800 employees are employed within Moria camp and 190 are employed in activities funded by the Ministry of Immigration Policy. If one were to add the personnel working on site in *Kara Tepe* and employed by numerous other NGOs that have been established and are running shelters, the total number of employees is estimated to total around 2,000 individuals on Lesbos. These are the people who have directly benefited from the refugee crisis, in the sense that it offered them employment. As I will show in subsection 3.9, there are also economic benefits for local businesses and the private sector. In that sense the “refugee crisis” is “a kind of solution” for a variety of locals, who would otherwise be unemployed or their businesses would have gone bankrupt as a consequence of the financial crisis. It is also “a kind of solution” for the Greek state, which does not need to take responsibility for providing employment opportunities in other ways.

3.7 Local civil society

Regarding Lesbos’ civil society and specifically former members of local grassroots movements and networks, I noticed that many of them had to leave behind their radical activist background and work for NGOs that were focussed on service-delivery rather than political change in order to earn a living. Characteristically, one of my interviewees, who is an NGO worker and used to have a very active role in local networks in the past, told me that, “during the last years the only feasible way for someone to find a job is to work for an NGO.” Still, this can affect or alter the way these people express their political views (Roy,

2009). This is also related to the professionalisation of humanitarianism and resistance and the concept of “NGOisation” (Choudry and Kapoor, 2013), which I further discuss in chapter 4.

As I argued in section 3.2, the refugee crisis affects local populations’ psychological wellbeing. The consequences can be even worse for members of civil society, like volunteers and activists, who deal on a constant basis with the refugee issue. As Laurence Cox notes (2011, p. 12), activists are vulnerable to the stress or trauma of witnessing social violence and oppression, poverty, environmental destruction etc., what can be described as secondary traumatisation. He notes that particularly difficult conditions include working outside the support of organisations, underground work, confrontation with the police, witnessing injuries done to others, having to make choices as to who to support or rescue (Ibid.). Furthermore, for some of the activists, volunteers and aid workers who witness injustices and human suffering on a frequent basis the consequences can be even worse, with the potential of burnout. Burnout is a chronic condition and results in people once highly committed to a movement, cause or organisation growing mentally exhausted (Schaufeli and Buunk 2002, in Chen and Gorski, 2015) and, as a result, losing the idealism and spirit that once drove them to work for social change (Pines 1994, in Chen and Gorski, 2015). Burnout has been a special concern in many caregiving occupations, where people often work very hard for few rewards but are strongly motivated by core values. Activism shares many of the characteristics of this kind of dedicated commitment and sacrifice, so it is not surprising that many activists report burnout at some stage (Maslach and Gomes 2006, in Chen and Gorski, 2015, p. 11).

Traumatisation and even burnout are some of the issues that I had also encountered myself, while I was a lawyer and activist in Greece. As a coordinator of a group of lawyers I often had to prioritise, exclude or include cases that were deserving legal aid. This kind of unwanted authority that was assigned to me had literally become a nightmare, since I had to decide whose life is more or less important (Sarantidis, 2018a). At the same time, I frequently witnessed scenes of violence and injustice taking place inside and outside of detention centres. In 2009, together with two colleagues of the NGO that I was working for, we raised allegations against Mytilene police for ill-treatment of unaccompanied minors. This led to acts of intimidation against us and threats by the Greek authorities (Georgoulas and Sarantidis, 2013), which had a considerable psychological impact on both my colleagues and me. In 2013 I had to leave the island, and consequently my activist work there, in order

to feel safer and protect my psychological wellbeing. This issue is also related to the “criminalisation of solidarity” by the authorities, meaning the harassment and criminalisation of those trying to give support to refugees (Fekete, 2018), including local activists and also refugees protesting for their rights on Lesbos. Criminalising solidarity has a psychological impact on activists and refugees, it has legal consequences and it also causes damage to the operation of solidarity networks, since dedicated activists, following accusations against them, frequently drop out of these networks. There are numerous cases on Lesbos regarding activists and refugees who were accused or even arrested arbitrarily following peaceful protests and/or acts of solidarity.¹⁶

The issue of activists’ burnout has impact not only on an individual level but also on the operation of Lesbos’ social networks and solidarity movements and thus Lesbos’ community at large. Committed activists and volunteers suffer and drop out of social networks because they have been traumatised or burnt out. As a result, traumatisation and burnout become a political issue. A former colleague, who has been awarded for her activist work, characteristically told me, “as you know the local activists who are getting involved with the refugee issue are very few and we do not have the luxury to see people dropping out of networks because they have burnt out. However, this is a reality. I am burned out myself too”. Hence, the issue of personal sustainability in social movements is important to many participants, both in terms of keeping going themselves and of supporting their fellow-activists and preventing burnout (Cox, 2011, p. 1). According to Cox (2011, p. 2), personal sustainability entails a range of issues that matter differentially to different people. These include general aspects of physical and economic survival as members of society, they include more specifically movement-relevant resources (pressures of money and time, access to communication and transport) and they also include psychological and emotional dimensions. As Maria, a local volunteer, pointed out, “we were going to the coasts of north Lesbos to help and we had to pay for petrol or a taxi ourselves. We were returning back home during the evening and we had to also take care of our own families”. Voula, a local volunteer and activist, told me that:

When the EU-Turkey deal was enforced one of the first things we tried to do was to stop deportations to Turkey. We were waking up at five in the morning, there was much networking, exchange of text

¹⁶ For an account of activist and refugee criminalisation on Lesbos see: Valero & Brzozowski, 2018; You can’t evict a movement, 2019.

messages, some people were swimming in the sea to stop the deportations, we were protesting, we were very active. However, we were not that many. After a period of time instead of a hundred people we remained around 20. It became impossible to go there every second day to stop a deportation and spend all of your day there. At some point I also got tired; mostly psychologically.

To sum up, although the refugee crisis has been an opportunity – a “kind of solution” in Cavafy’s words – for many members of local civil society to economically survive, at the same time, stress, trauma, burnout, personal sustainability, the criminalisation of solidarity and the professionalisation of resistance (chapter 5), have caused considerable damage to the local activists and networks on Lesbos, which were previously active.

3.8 Local authorities and public services

Local authorities and public services are another part of Lesbos’ local community where the “crisis within the crisis” is reflected. Cuts in various sectors have led to a subsequent deterioration of the quality of provided services. A representative of local entrepreneurs whom I interviewed referred to the depreciation of the island’s facilities, infrastructures and essential services, due to the financial crisis. As he said, these consequences were amplified during the refugee crisis and most importantly after the enforcement of the “geographical restriction” of refugees’ movement (chapter 3), which has led thousands of refugees to remain stranded on the island. Specifically, he argued:

Local infrastructures and facilities were designed to provide services for the populations permanently living on Lesbos. Suddenly, 15,000 refugees have been added to this population and it became impossible for these services to effectively respond to the needs of Lesbos’ community; not only these infrastructures have not been enhanced with human resources, but due to the financial crisis the services that they provide are getting worse and worse.

Healthcare is one of the main parts of the Greek public sector that has been affected by the financial crisis. A 2014 report in the *Lancet* medical journal (Kentikelenis *et al.*, 2014) highlighted the devastating social and health consequences of the financial crisis and resulting austerity on the country's population. Austerity measures have affected the health

of Greeks and their access to public health services. During my fieldwork I witnessed long queues of patients waiting outside and inside primary health services. As Markela, a medical INGO representative told me,

I understand that Lesvos hospital is understaffed, because it is for an island, or for a town of 30,000 and now you also have a town of 10,000 refugees. It is very difficult, for example, to refer our psychiatric cases, because as I understand they do not have the capacity to do this.

A doctor working at the primary health care sector emphasised that their working staff has been reduced while Evelina, an IO worker, told me that:

The hospital has collapsed. I have a friend working there as a midwife and she told me that they have too many refugee pregnant women and that it is impossible for them to properly deal with the situation. In addition, many refugees are pursuing to visit the hospital in order to be recognised as vulnerable. The situation is also tragic when you visit the paediatric department, it is mad!

Other local services that have been affected by the crises include the Citizens Service Centre, the Manpower Employment Organisation (job centre), and the Tax Office. All of these services are understaffed, as a consequence of the financial crisis, and at the same time they have to provide services for the thousands of refugees stranded on Lesvos. During my fieldwork I was frequently observing the long queues that were starting at the Citizens Service Centre, where refugees had to apply for their national insurance number. Next, they were queuing at the Tax Office in order to obtain a tax number and then at the job centre in order to obtain a declaration that they are unemployed. My interviewees from these services mentioned that they do not have the capacity to provide adequate services for these populations, and the fact that they do not have any interpretation services makes the situation even worse.

I also noticed that this situation was causing locals to complain about not receiving adequate services, a reality that frequently leads to an escalation of xenophobia and racism (section 3.4). I also found that the staff of these services were working under extremely difficult

working conditions; some of them were suffering from severe emotional stress (section 3.2). “I do not have any alternative of finding a job somewhere else and, as a result, I have to endure this situation”, an interviewee told me. A director of these public services mentioned that due to the working conditions and the high stress, his blood pressure was getting very high. Our interview was interrupted because he received a phone call by someone from Moria’s camp administrative staff, who was asking for him to speed up the procedures. After this phone call he measured his blood pressure in front of me, which had risen to 18.5. I immediately offered to postpone our interview, although he wanted to continue because, as he said, “I want to express my worries to someone; nobody has ever come here to consider our point of view”.

The “crisis within the crisis” was also reflected within the services that Lesvos municipality was providing. The spokesperson of the municipality told me that,

our working staff has not been empowered at all and this is an outcome of the Greek state’s commitments to its creditors, as a result of the financial crisis. We are not allowed to hire permanent working staff and some of the immediate needs are covered by temporary staff with contracts lasting for a few months.

One of the vice mayors told me at the end of our interview: “to sum up, there is only one thing that I have to say, we need help, SOS!”

3.9 Private sector and local businesses

Greek entrepreneurship has been significantly affected during the years of the financial crisis. The business sector in Greece shrank by over 244,000 firms between 2008 and 2015 and this has also meant the loss of 842,670 jobs in that period (Bellos, 2016). In the case of Lesvos the refugee crisis had diverse implications. As I show, although tourism was negatively affected, other sectors of local businesses have benefited. In addition, depending on Lesvos’ different locales there were different implications on local businesses. According to Aris:

Before the refugee crisis villages like Petra and Molyvos, which are tourist destinations, were the locales on Lesvos attracting visitors; however, this has changed and most of the money is now spend at

Mytilene market. There has been a redistribution of income and wealth on the island. Suddenly, Mytilene became the epicentre of Lesvos, where people are arriving and staying for short or long periods of time.

The 2015 refugee crisis has had a negative impact on the hotel industry of Lesvos, the accommodation establishments, and more generally, the image of the island as a tourist destination (Ivanov and Stavrinoudis, 2018). According to the president of Lesvos' travel agencies, tourism and all professional activities surrounding the tourist industry are the main sector on Lesvos which has been negatively affected by the refugee crisis. "In 2016 we had a reduction of up to 70%; we have started recovering now, but this is not an easy process and will last for as long as we have increased refugee arrivals and refugees remaining stranded here". The president of Molyvos village, one of the main tourist attractions on Lesvos, told me that the refugee crisis almost destroyed the tourist industry there. However, as many of my interviewees argued, the void that was left by the tourists was filled by the intervening actors that settled on the island, ranging from EU agencies and humanitarian organisations to volunteers¹⁷, journalists and researchers.

Katerina, a local from Molyvos village, told me that even for places like Molyvos, where the tourist industry was most significantly affected, "the situation is not black and white". She argued that the refugee crisis served as a second tourist period for Molyvos:

The tourist period ends in September and during winter and early spring the village is only inhabited by its local residents. However, the situation during winter 2015 was like the peak tourist period in August. I have never seen Molyvos like that before! There were people everywhere, cafes and restaurants remained open, the local market was working; it was hard for someone to find accommodation, everything was booked. Locals started complaining and reacting after May 2016, when they noticed that flights and tourist packages had started to be cancelled.

¹⁷ It is estimated that 7,356 volunteers have been involved in the "refugee crisis", from 2016 until early 2018, on Lesvos (EmprosNet.gr, 2018).

Nikos Manavis (2018) argues that there is much evidence to show that the refugee crisis has had positive effects on the economy of Lesbos and local businesses. Many apartments, houses and entire hotels have been rented out due to the refugee crisis, he says. Apart from the intervening actors renting accommodation, UNHCR runs the EU-funded ESTIA accommodation scheme in collaboration with NGOs (UNHCR, no date a). As Maria, a local NGO representative, informed me, “we are partners with the UNHCR and under the ESTIA scheme we are renting almost 100 houses at Mytilene and we also have 350 people working there.” However, as Aris noted, due to the high demand for accommodation the rent prices have gone up exponentially. “A problem is arising for students who arrive here to study at the University of the Aegean, for the military working staff on the island, for public servants and school teachers, who cannot rent a cheap accommodation”. This was a reality that I also noticed myself at the hotel where I was living during my fieldwork. Many of the people accommodated there were complaining that they could not find a house to rent.

Furthermore, as Manavis observes (2018), “the refugees constitute a great part of the clientele of many law offices of the island, of the public transportation means, the super markets, the grocery stores while at the same time they offer cheap labour for farming and animal tending activities of all sorts on the island”. When I arrived on Lesbos for my fieldwork, I noticed that Mytilene was not as I used to know it. Dozens of new restaurants and cafes had opened, and hundreds of members of (I)NGOs, journalists, researchers and volunteers were going there on a regular basis, empowering in this way the local economy. In addition, UNHCR runs the EU-funded cash assistance programme (UNHCR, no date a), which means that each one of the 11,000 stranded asylum seekers on the island was entitled to a monthly allowance ranging from 90 –130 Euro. As Maria told me, “all that money, which is at least one million Euro per month, goes directly to Mytilene local market”. Nevertheless, as the Lesbos merchants’ representative commented:

Economically speaking the enterprises which have mainly benefited are some big supermarkets, which are close to the main camps and are of Belgian, Chinese and German interests, not local. Furthermore, NGOs have a list of local shops, depending on whether or not a shop owner is in favour or against the way the refugee issue is managed.

However, as Aris noticed, some of those complaining are those who are not making any profit from the refugee crisis due to the nature of their businesses, like those not selling goods

for refugees' basic necessities. Generally speaking, I observed that the positive and negative consequences that the refugee crisis had on local businesses is a continuous debate among local populations. The different points of view and the conflicting interests characterising these debates were also an additional factor challenging social cohesion on Lesbos (section 3.4).

Despite the negative effects that the refugee crisis has had, particularly on tourism, the benefits for local businesses and local economy are considerable and during a period of financial crisis it has boosted the local economy in various ways. As a worker from the Ministry of Citizen Protection claimed, "if all that money stemming from the refugee issue were suddenly stopping to flow in the local economy, an economically ruined community would afterwards arise". In that sense, the proverb *homo homini lupus* becomes relevant here again. However, as Giorgos, an NGO worker argued, "the economic growth and sustainable development of a place cannot and should not be depended on human suffering and on short term solutions". The representative of Lesbos' merchants emphasised that "in a few words what is happening on Lesbos during the last years is not a sustainable development, I would rather call it a "sustainable disaster".

Conclusion

Although the main temporal period that my research is focusing on is the refugee crisis and its aftermath, in this chapter I interlinked this period with the pre-existing Greek financial crisis. I argued that the consequences of the refugee crisis on the everyday lives of local populations cannot be isolated from Greece's most recent economic, social and political developments. I also argued that the austerity measures imposed during the financial crisis had negative impacts not only on the lives of Greek citizens but also on the reception of refugees arriving to Greece. This reality paved the way for the intervention of humanitarian actors during the years of the refugee crisis. Furthermore, the financial crisis, which was about the "failed" Greek state, allowed the 2015 exceptional border functions to be usurped by various intervening actors and policy makers.

In section 1, I offered a brief genealogy of the term "crisis" and showed how contemporary crises on Lesbos have become enduring and permanent and have had devastating consequences on people's everyday lives. The dominant, contemporary meaning of "crisis", as opposed to its original meaning as a moment of judgement and choice, seems to indicate a permanent or indefinite situation, and often serves to legitimise political and economic

decisions taken by unelected actors, which overlook the voices of those populations being directly affected by these decisions. Contrary to arguments suggesting that crisis can be a chance for a radical reorganisation of an existing order, “crisis” can also become an instrument of power, serving diverse aims and interests among actors. I further elaborate on this issue in chapter 5.

In section 2, I argued that although the refugee crisis was not an unforeseen and unpreventable event, the discourses of the dysfunctional and “failed” Greek state served to legitimate enduring and exceptional interventions. Instead of recovering alleged failings of the Greek state, these interventions created a suffocating environment for Lesbos’ populations, with the consequences of the refugee crisis adding to the burden of the financial crisis and becoming a “shock within a shock”.

In section 3 I explored the economic, social, psychological, and environmental implications of the “crisis within the crisis” by focusing on Lesbos’ local community. I argued that in economic terms the “refugee crisis” has become a “kind of solution” (Cavafys, 1904) for many locals, who have found themselves in unemployment and precariousness in the aftermath of the financial crisis, while opportunism and economic dependencies frequently lead to an objectification of refugees. Even though the refugee crisis boosted, to an extent, some parts of local economy and turned Lesbos into a multicultural society, which is seen as something positive by some locals, it simultaneously became an additional source of frustration that magnified the negative impacts of the financial crisis. Local services and infrastructures were further degraded, while environmental consequences were also considerable. Locals’ psychological wellbeing has been negatively affected, with consequences both on an individual and a collective level. Additionally, for some locals who saw their businesses, or their everyday lives negatively affected, the refugee crisis was perceived as a source of frustration. In this context, refugees became an ideal scapegoat. This new reality on Lesbos created disputes among locals, who had opposing interests or ideologies. Therefore, the refugee crisis disrupted previous forms of social cohesion by also allowing space for xenophobia and racist violence by locals targeting not only refugees, but also humanitarian workers and volunteers. At the time of writing, this situation was escalating.

Considering that the notion of crisis is deeply intertwined with the notion of permanent emergency, which is characterised by the enforcement of exceptional measures and policies,

in the next chapter I explore how the enduring 2015 refugee crisis can be interpreted as a “state of exception” (Agamben, 2005). I explain how various exceptional “border regime” policies violate the rule of law in terms of legitimisation and democratic accountability, sidelining the voices and concerns of local populations.

Chapter 3: The “border regime” as a “state of exception”

Introduction

In the previous chapter I explored the refugee crisis as a crisis within the Greek financial crisis and I analysed how the coexistence of these crises affects the everyday lives of Lesbos' local populations. As I showed, contemporary crises are characterised by the enforcement of emergency and exceptional measures, which tend to be enduring despite claims to their temporary nature. In this chapter I focus on the enduring refugee crisis and its aftermath by exploring it as a “state of exception” (Agamben, 2005). I explain how the exceptional border regime on Lesbos is shaped through the enforcement of policies and measures that violate the rule of law in terms of legitimisation and democratic accountability.

In section 1, I introduce and critically interrogate Agamben's concept of the “state of exception” (Agamben, 2005). I also argue that within a state of exception different populations can be abandoned by law to different degrees, but despite this abandonment these populations can still resist and have agency. In section 2, I explain how the state of exception applies to my case study. In relation to Lesbos, I argue that there are multiple sovereignties at work within an exceptional space, and that the combined effect of these sovereignties mirrors a single sovereign's effects. I also argue that the exceptional border policies were founded to a large extent on the securitisation of migration and discourses associated with the politics of fear. In section 3, I discuss how the exceptional border policies are shaping an emerging border regime, which has led to an externalisation, and at the same time, an internalisation of the EU borders. I argue that the border regime comprises two elements. Its first element consists of the enforcement of measures and policies that violate the rule of law in terms of legitimisation. The most important policies to be critically discussed are the “hotspot approach” (European Commission, 2015), the closure of the “Balkan route”, and the implementation of the Joint EU-Turkey Statement, followed by the “geographical restriction” of refugees' movement on the Aegean islands (Council of the European Union, 2016). The second element of the border regime, namely the intervention of multiple humanitarian and security actors, is discussed in the next chapter.

1. The “state of exception”

In this section I explore the concept of the “state of exception” (Agamben, 2005) and argue that states of exception can materialise differently in different places or for different

populations. I also refer to forms of resistance and struggles against exceptional policies, which can defy the state of exception.

The concept of state of exception originates in Carl Schmitt's legal theory. Schmitt developed the concept in *Political Theology* (1922), where he defined the sovereign as he who decides on the state of exception, simply by virtue of being sovereign. The sovereign has the power to declare that conventional circumstances, within which the law functions, do not hold. This ability to decide upon the exception was not just constituted by the sovereign, but constitutive of him.¹⁸ For Schmitt, the state of exception is a means of imposing *nomos* (legal order) on *anomie*, and ultimately either bringing it back into an existing (but temporarily suspended) constitutional order or incorporating it within a new constitutional order (Cooper-Knock, 2018, p. 24). For Agamben (2005, pp. 57–58), however, in modern democracies our current situation is one in which “the exception has become the rule”,¹⁹ where legal order and *anomie* are reaching a point of indistinction. Consequently, the state of exception opens up a “juridical void” (Agamben, 2005, p. 42) where juridical measures cannot be understood in the sphere of law. As Agamben (2005, p. 1) explains,

if exceptional measures are the result of periods of political crisis and, as such, must be understood on political and not juridico-constitutional grounds [...], then they find themselves in the paradoxical position of being juridical measures that cannot be understood in legal terms, and the state of exception appears as the legal form of what cannot have legal form.

While law and politics may continue to refer to one another, they are no longer ‘in relation’ and the law cannot constrain the violence of the state (Cooper-Knock, 2018, p. 24). The result is “a production of a paralegal universe that goes by the name of law” (Butler, 2006, p. 61). In that respect two main characteristics of western democracies are challenged. Firstly, the constitutional division of state functions. As Agamben (2005, p. 18) argues,

the democratic principle of the separation of powers has today collapsed and the executive power has in fact, at least partially,

¹⁸ I gender the sovereign as male because that is what Schmitt does.

¹⁹ Agamben is following Walter Benjamin (1968, p. 257), who argued that “the ‘state of emergency’ in which we live is not the exception but the rule.” While Benjamin made this argument with reference to the oppressed, Agamben generalises this state to apply to modern society as a whole (see also: Cooper-Knock, 2018).

absorbed the legislative power. Parliament is no longer the sovereign legislative body that holds the exclusive power to bind the citizens by means of the law: it is limited to ratifying the decrees issued by the executive power.

As I further discuss in section 3 of this chapter, in the cases of Greece and Lesbos there are various examples showing not only that the executive – which is often replaced by the administrative – power has expanded into the legislative or judicial sphere, but also that in many cases the Greek parliament was limited to ratifying decisions being taken by external executive actors, like the European Commission, which is the executive branch of the European Union.²⁰

A second characteristic of modern democracies being challenged through the permanence of the state of exception is the disappearance of the various individual rights that individuals can claim against the state. Within a state of exception, Agamben (2005, p. 3) claims, constitutional rights are challenged by erasing any legal status of the individual and producing a legally unnameable and unclassifiable being. The ability of the sovereign to decide upon the exception can produce “bare life”. According to Agamben (1998, p. 97), “bare life” is what is left when politically qualified life (*bios*) – the form or manner in which life is lived – has been stripped of its legal-political protection and what remains is *zoē*, the biological fact of life, which is common to all creatures, human and animal alike. Abandoned by law, bare life can be subjected to unmediated sovereign violence (Cooper-Knock, 2018, p. 24).

Agamben suggests that refugees are a contemporary example of “bare life” and refugee camps can be seen as the ultimate biopolitical space, where, as Hannah Arendt (1951, p. 459) has put it, “everything is possible”, meaning that “everything can be destroyed” by the sovereign whose acts remain unpunishable. As Agamben (1998, p. 8) argues, there is a paradox, since “the refugee is included while being excluded and excluded while being included”. It is in this sense difficult to decide whether refugees are inside or outside; they are at once at the mercy of the juridical context in which they seek international protection and are exposed, at the same time, to any kind of threat and violence, but without any legal consequences stemming from that breach of law; in that way the “human” and the “inhuman”

²⁰ In chapter 5 I explore to what extent this relationship between the European Union and the Greek state establishes a form of colonialism.

enter into a biopolitical zone of indistinction (Diken, 2004, pp. 88–89). Diken explains (Ibid.) that this “ban-opticon”²¹ does not exist outside society but is internal to it, just as the “state of nature” does not exist prior to “civilization” but is established through the ban. In other words, the banned is not simply outside the law and “indifferent” to it, but is rather abandoned by it (Agamben, 1998, p. 76). Agamben illustrates the concept of ‘the ban’ with a figure that inhabits a zone of indistinction – the werewolf – whose life epitomises a ‘threshold’ or indistinction between the animal and the human, *physis* and *nomos*, exclusion and inclusion (Ibid. 104). Agamben explains that, “the life of the bandit is the life of the werewolf, who is precisely neither man nor beast, who dwells paradoxically within both while belonging to neither” (Ibid. 78). This “inclusive exclusion” of bare life by the sovereign, Agamben argues, was captured in the figure of “homo sacer” within Roman Law. An individual turns into “homo sacer”, a person banned from society and denied all rights; power itself morphs into a biopower²² exerted on “bare life” (Agamben, 1998, p. 171).

1.1 Can “bare lives” have agency?

At this point I should clarify that Agamben, by referring to the concept of “bare life”, does not deny agency to the refugee. He sees the refugee as a figure abandoned by law but, at the same time, as the protagonist of contemporary politics; he suggests that by fully comprehending the significance of the refugee we may countenance new ways of political belonging and the limits and possibilities of political community in the future (Owens, 2009, p. 568). He explains that after the nation-state and its associated legal and political categories have been assigned to history, the refugee will remain as “the only thinkable figure for the people of our time and the only category in which one may see today [...] the forms and limits of a coming political community” (Agamben, 2000, p. 16). As I explain in the next subsection, apart from refugees, other populations can also be abandoned by law and the abandonment by law is not necessarily tied to a loss of agency. For example, during a state

²¹ “Ban-opticon” was developed as a concept by Didier Bigo (2002, p. 82), who argues that the form of governmentality of postmodern societies is not a panopticon in which global surveillance is placed upon the shoulders of everybody, but a form of ban-opticon in which the technologies of surveillance sort out who needs to be under surveillance and who is free of surveillance, because of their profile.

²² The concept of “biopower” or “biopolitics” was introduced by Michel Foucault (1978). Agamben moves beyond Foucault’s insights into biopower and the emergence of a modern rationality of government focused on the management of the life, well-being and productivity of the population. For Agamben the bio-political had always been bound up in the exercise of sovereignty. Foucault, by contrast, had argued that bio-politics emerged as a defining feature of specifically modern politics and could be theoretically distinguished from sovereignty or, in Foucault’s terms, ‘juridical-institution politics’. Agamben (1998, 2005) held that modern politics simply amplified a bond between bio-politics and sovereignty that was there all along (see: Cooper-Knock, 2018, pp. 23–24).

of exception imposed within a dictatorial regime, the separation of powers is undoubtedly challenged and constitutional rights of a considerable part of a state's population are violated. However, this does not mean that these populations abandoned by law do not have agency. Historically speaking, within dictatorships people protest and revolutions take place.

In the case of Lesbos, not only refugees but also locals are abandoned by law – to different degrees, as I argue in the next subsection. Similar to refugees locals are not simply “bare life”; they are rather “political actors whose subjectivities are shaped by the uneven social and symbolic environments in which they are simultaneously positioned and position themselves” (Holmes and Castañeda, 2016, p. 20). In this respect, the forms of resistance on Lesbos and struggles against exceptional policies are multi-layered (Tsoni, 2016; Serntedakis, 2017; Gillespie, 2018; Stierl, 2019) and defy to an extent, as I explain below, various exceptional policies. Moreover, struggles against the border regime on Lesbos shed light on the conditions in which a protest emerges in a context of a state of exception (Lendaro, 2016, p. 154). During my fieldwork I witnessed acts of resistance, when I participated in demonstrations (chapter 1). As many of my interlocutors on Lesbos told me, refugees marching from Moria to Mytilene, protesting their confinement on the island, is a common phenomenon. My interviewees also referred to various cases when refugees occupied Mytilene's squares or even governmental buildings. Even more intense forms of resistance by refugees are expressed through “despair harms” (Iliadou, 2019a, p. 151), like hunger strikes and starvation, self-harms and suicide attempts. Frequently refugees also burn out containers and tents in Moria camp, in order to express their opposition to the inhuman reception conditions there.²³ In that respect refugees are politically active and raise political claims that test the limits of citizenship, the extension of political community and the expression of human rights (McNevin, 2013, p. 183). In many cases local and international activists demonstrate on their own or join refugees' struggles and protests.²⁴ At the same time, Lesbos' locals frequently demonstrate and protest demanding the decongestion²⁵ of Lesbos. General strikes are also frequent with public services and local shops remaining closed for days. The president of Moria village referred during our interview to his hunger strike and protest – in June 2018 – at the entrance of the building of the General Secretariat of Island Policy in Mytilene. As he said, “this was an ultimate form of resistance by me, as

²³ See also section 3.3 of the conclusion of this thesis about the fires that destroyed Moria camp in September 2020.

²⁴ I elaborate more on the issues of agency and solidarity on Lesbos in chapter 4.

²⁵ The word “decongestion” is widely used by local and international actors, who demand the stranded refugees on Lesbos to be transferred to the Greek mainland or other EU countries.

a representative of Moria's villagers, in order for an immediate solution to be found regarding the camp".

Furthermore, the fact that the situation on Lesbos has become permanent makes locals even more indignant and their acts of resistance gradually become more intense. For example, in February 2020 the Greek government announced that it will be going ahead forcibly with plans to build a new huge closed detention facility on Lesbos, by expropriating private plots (Smith, 2020). This was perceived by locals as a further abandonment by law. Consequently, local authorities together with the support of the vast majority of locals strongly opposed this policy. For days clashes broke out and more than sixty people were injured, when locals tried to prevent the arrival of riot police and excavating machines to be used to build the new closed detention camp (Kokkinidis, 2020). Following demonstrations and general strikes locals managed to put an end to the Greek government's plans, which were aligned with the EU policies of transforming Lesbos into a securitised zone (see section 3.4 and chapter 4).

Nevertheless, as I previously argued, the struggles against exceptional policies on Lesbos, despite being multi-layered, defy only to an extent the exceptional and enduring border regime. Despite the various forms of resistance, the situation on Lesbos has not only been normalised but also seems to have gotten worse for both refugees and locals. A broader reason I identified to explain the normalisation of the situation on Lesbos despite the various forms of resistance is that the struggles against exceptional policies are not united. One of my questions during my fieldwork was how resistance can be expressed collectively in a destabilised local community. Even though refugees, locals and NGOs each demand the "decongestion" of Lesbos, they are not organised in a collective voice and their protests and struggles take place separately, an issue which is related to the escalation of racism and xenophobia. A president of one of Lesbos' villages characteristically told me that, "locals find it derogatory to march together with refugees; they consider them to be uncivilised. They also avoid marching together with NGOs, because they regard them to be a part of the problem". Furthermore, the disruption of previous forms of social cohesion on Lesbos has divided locals who are receptive and those who are hostile towards refugees; not only do they attend separate demonstrations, they also blame each other of unethical motives and misguided ideologies. As I also argue in the conclusion of this thesis, when refugees, locals and humanitarian actors act collectively there is an increased chance for positive structural change to take place.

Finally, I should also clarify that although refugees and locals both demand the decongestion of Lesbos, the reasons for this demand are not necessarily identical, because these populations are abandoned by law differently. Thus, in the next subsection I argue that there is a need to make a distinction among different kinds of abandonment by law, because different populations experience and are affected by the state of exception differently.

1.2 Degrees of abandonment by law

Although I mentioned that refugees are a contemporary example of populations experiencing abandonment by law as a result of the state of exception, the examples of the state of exception vary. For Agamben, the paradigmatic example of the state of exception was the concentration camp at Auschwitz. The emergence of this camp was not an anomaly, but revealed a “hidden matrix” that was present in both liberal democracies and totalitarian states (Agamben, 1998, p. 110). What was of interest to Agamben was not the lives lived within Auschwitz but its juridical-political structure (De la Durantaye, 2009): the camp was any space in which the state of exception became the rule and bare life was systematically produced. It was because he focused on the juridico-political structure of camps that he placed Guantanamo Bay and the Bari stadium (where Italian police detained Albanians before their deportation) in the same category as Auschwitz (Cooper-Knock, 2018, p. 25). Agamben concluded that what Foucault saw as the emergence of bio-politics was, in fact, the emergence of the exception as the rule, which had shifted the “realm of bare life” from “the margins of the political order” (Agamben, 1998, p. 127; Cooper-Knock, 2018, p. 25). He argued that: “If today there is no longer any one clear figure of the sacred man, it is perhaps because we are all virtually *homines sacri*” (Agamben, 1998, p. 68), caught within a permanent state of exception of which the juridico-political structure of the concentration camp was paradigmatic. Consequently, the paradigmatic form of the camp is not the only biopolitical space that separates qualified and expendable lives, and the camp can take various forms. As Ramadan notes (2013, p. 18), while the refugee appears as the ‘sacred man’ stripped of all political life, the structure of modern sovereignty means that any and every person, citizen or refugee, can be excluded from the political order and, under specific circumstances, various populations can turn into *homines sacri*.

However, Ramadan, who follows Agamben’s argument that “we are all virtually *homines sacri*”, fails to explore who is affected under different circumstances and what these circumstances and levels of the state of exception are. In that respect arguments such as Ramadan’s risk flattening real differences in the “ban-opticon”. Once my fieldwork was

completed, I realised that Agamben's work has been developed largely theoretically, that it lacks an empirical focus, and hence carries the risk of overgeneralisation. Based on my fieldwork, my own understanding is that states of exception materialise differently in different places or for different populations and can generate multiple ways of abandonment by law. In the case of Lesbos refugees and locals are not necessarily abandoned by law in the same way and the consequences of these abandonments on their everyday lives are also different (see next section). Agamben (2000), although not empirically exploring the above contemporary issues, acknowledges that "we must learn to recognize the camp in all of its metamorphoses" and Stefan Skrimshire (2011, p. 158) explains that recognising metamorphoses would involve, for instance, "interpreting and communicating every step taken by authorities to suspend and exclude the rights of civilians". I take up this challenge in relation to Lesbos and in the next two sections I look at what the transformation of the island into an exceptional space entails.

2. The "state of exception" on Lesbos

Lesbos serves as a contemporary example of the "state of exception", showing how sovereign power is enforced and extended. Lesbos is interesting because the enforcement of exceptional border policies, the intervention of multiple 'expert' actors enabling these border policies (chapter 4) and the "securitisation of migration" (subsection 2.1) on Lesbos have established a sphere outside the realm of 'normal politics', where the rule of law is suspended indefinitely and different subjectivities, like refugees and locals, are differently abandoned by law. Therefore, Lesbos illustrates that there is, firstly, a need for an empirical focus, in order to understand the mechanisms through which a state of exception is imposed and becomes the rule in contemporary societies. Secondly, the case of Lesbos underlines that through an empirical focus the different degrees of abandonment by law can be unpacked. Thirdly, Lesbos is interesting because it moves beyond the single sovereign actor conceptualised by Schmitt and Agamben and illustrates how a state of exception can be imposed by the combined force of multiple sovereign actors.

So, while Agamben's notion of the camp, as a "space of exception", is useful in understanding how and why the rule of law is suspended, a thorough analysis of the operation of the space of exception "requires a nuanced and empirically informed approach, sensitive to the particular characteristics of real camps, the politics, people, relations and practices that constitute camps on an everyday basis" (Ramadan, 2013, pp. 69–70). As I argued, the exceptional border regime on Lesbos has materialised on a local level affecting not only

refugees but also local populations. Over the past five years Lesvos has been transformed into an open prison. As I explained in the previous chapter, the vast majority of refugees on Lesvos are not detained at the main camps but are instead allowed to move freely on the island, where they interact with multiple actors and local populations. Thus, this situation does not only concern refugees but also locals and the ‘ban-opticon’ (Bigo, 2002) covering refugees’ lives on Lesvos has become an integral part of Lesvos’ local community. As I showed in the previous chapter, the exceptional border regime policies on Lesvos, combined with the exceptional policies brought by the financial crisis, have multiple consequences upon local populations’ everyday lives. Furthermore, the securitisation of migration (section 2.1) and the transformation of the island into a surveillance and humanitarian space (chapter 4), a peculiar open-air camp (section 3.4) and a post-colonial space (chapter 5) has turned Lesvos into a particular kind of state of exception, where there are different kinds of abandonment by law, which refugees and locals experience differently. Refugees on Lesvos, for example, have no ability to work, they have limited access to health services and education and are excluded economically, socially and politically; they are also forced to live in inhuman, appalling and degrading conditions for prolonged periods of time and are not allowed to travel to the Greek mainland or Europe (Iliadou, 2019a). The vast majority of locals might live in better conditions, they are allowed to travel and work and have better access to health services and education. However, their abandonment by law also has important economic, social and psychological consequences and, in general, this has also affected social cohesion on Lesvos (chapter 2). As I will also argue in chapter 5, this abandonment by law frequently makes local populations feel as if they have been “invaded” or colonised not only by the EU and its intervening actors but also by the Greek state.

Lesvos also serves as an example indicating that the state of exception can be produced by multiple sovereigns as opposed to a single sovereign and that the way sovereignty is exercised in modern democracies works differently – in more complex ways, with multiple, partial sovereigns – than what Schmitt, and even Agamben after him, envisioned. Thus, the camp can be a space not of one sovereign who can suspend the rule of law, in Agamben’s terms, but of multiple partially sovereign state, non-state and international actors (Tsianos and Karakayali, 2010; Hess and Kasperek, 2017b). As I show in chapter 4, many of the external actors having intervened on Lesvos have decision making powers, state-like biopolitical functions, they compete for power, they interact and/or collaborate with each other (Ramadan, 2013). They thus establish a new exercise of state sovereignty that takes place outside the law through an elaboration of “administrative bureaucracies” (Butler, 2006,

p. 51), in which state and non-state actors and institutions make decisions; in that respect there exist multiple sovereignties, which can be conceptualised in various ways.²⁶

In particular, state sovereignty is often institutionally and spatially fragmented (Lund, 2011) and thus operates unevenly in different geographic locations. Aihwa Ong (2008, p. 120) uses the terms “graduated” and “variegated” sovereignty to describe the differential ordering of groups and zones across and beyond a national terrain. Her work on graduated sovereignty demonstrates that political authority is spatially variegated and flexibly adjusted in different zones of national spaces, giving to various actors an indirect power over the political conditions of citizens in zones that are differently articulated on global production and financial circuits (Ong, 2006). As Saskia Sassen (2017, p. 1) observes:

[...] specific operational spaces [...] recur in country after country but are not necessarily framed by national or international law, or by visible legal markers, even as they use particular national institutions such as laws and courts. These operational spaces contribute to the making of cross-border geographies that include only parts of national territories, often excluding most of the pertinent ‘sovereign territory’ that houses them. These operational spaces look like they belong to those countries as they are marked by thick territorial insertions: whether it is financial centres with their massive concentrations of buildings, or human rights activists tracking tortured bodies in prisons or abandoned fields. Yet, they are in fact tightly bordered territorial fragments that keep out what they do not want in.

By considering the above, Lesvos as a case study demonstrates a situation where there are multiple sovereignties at work creating an exceptional space in the Greek region, and that these sovereignties can create an effect that mirrors a single sovereign’s effects. For both the Greek state and the EU, for example, the state of exception on Lesvos serves in securitising a whole region (see next subsection). As I also discuss in this thesis, even though diverse sovereign actors might have different aims and interests, these can be fulfilled through the enforcement of commonly agreed exceptional policies. For EU countries, which internalise

²⁶ In chapter 5 I further discuss how the endurance of the state of exception influenced Greek state sovereignty as well as regular democratic procedures on Lesvos.

the EU borders (section 3.2) through the enforcement of exceptional border policies, Lesbos serves as a buffer zone fulfilling present and future interests in keeping refugees stranded there (chapter 5). For some humanitarian actors the enduring border regime serves in attracting funding and establishing a permanent presence on Lesbos (chapter 4). In the next section, I shed more light on some of the justifications being used by some actors and institutions for the suspension of the rule of law on Lesbos.

2.1. A “state of exception” in the name of security and the “politics of fear”

As I showed in the previous chapter, EU policy makers frequently invoke the notion of humanitarianism or “humanitarian crisis”, in order to legitimise various exceptional border policies. However, the invocation of “humanitarianism” is not the only justification being used to enforce exceptional policies. Migration has increasingly been described in security terms by categorising border crossers as a potential security threat. There are even arguments suggesting that humanitarianism nowadays has an expansive meaning, concerning logics developed not only to manage disaster but also to secure imminently mobile populations for the maintenance of the liberal order (Pallister-Wilkins, 2018). In any case, the condition of refugee arrivals is not only a “humanitarian issue” – according to the mainstream meaning of humanitarianism that emerged in the 20th-century (see: chapter 5) – but is also perceived as “a law enforcement and national security problem” (Gibney, 2000, p. 4), and is thus linked to the notion of “securitisation of migration” (Ibrahim, 2005; Huysmans, 2006; Boswell, 2007; Squire, 2015). Moreover, as I argue in the next paragraphs, discourses associated with the “politics of fear” (Keane, 2001; Robin, 2006) can enable securitisation policies.

The process in which migration discourse shifts toward an emphasis on security is referred to as the “securitisation of migration” and provides useful insights as to why the rule of law is suspended. Securitisation as a concept was brought onto the agenda of security studies by the Copenhagen School²⁷ and in particular the work of Buzan et al (1998), who explored what the implications of securitisation are. They defined securitisation as a process of social construction that pushes an area of regular politics into an area of security, by resorting to a rhetoric of discursive emergence, threat and danger aimed at justifying the adoption of extraordinary measures. For Buzan et al, “speech acts” are crucial in the securitisation process. Through a “speech act”, they argue, “the issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political

²⁷ The Copenhagen School of security studies is a school of academic thought that places particular emphasis on the non-military aspects of security, representing a shift away from traditional security studies (Collins, 2016).

procedure” (Ibid. pp.23-24). In other words, migration becomes a security issue, not necessarily because of the nature or the objective importance of a threat, but because it is presented as such (Ibid. p. 24).

In particular, during the refugee crisis, the European Commission highlighted the humanitarian and security issues linked to the refugee arrivals by declaring in 2016 that “temporary and extraordinary measures” need to be taken in order to “end the human suffering and restore public order” (Council of the European Union, 2016). A year before, in November 2015, the EU policy makers during the Valletta Summit on Migration, had already expressed their “deep concern” following the increase in flows of refugees, which entailed “serious humanitarian consequences and security challenges” (Council of the European Union, 2015, p. 1). By using the language of crisis, emergency, humanitarianism (Ticktin, 2016), and security, the “deep concern” of the European policy makers was materialised through a “preventive protection” process (Hyndman, 2003, p. 168) at and within the borders (Garelli, Sciurba and Tazzioli, 2018). This response involved the enforcement of a number of border policies targeting the proliferation and fortification of borders, the erection of fences, strengthened securitisation and militarisation of the borders, as well as an overwhelming humanitarian intervention (De Genova & Tazzioli, 2016, also see chapter 5).

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the systematic and repeated “shock therapy” (Klein, 2007) local populations of Lesvos have been experiencing from 2010 onwards has restricted the spaces of resistance against the exceptional policies being enforced during the Greek crises. This “shock therapy” combined with an enduring state of fear, or “politics of fear” (Keane, 2001; Robin, 2006), suggesting that any other alternative²⁸ would be catastrophic, provided further space for exceptional policies to be enforced. Both the Greek financial and refugee crises suggest that exceptional policies could not have been enforced without the invocation of different discourses; these discourses are associated with the assumption that presenting people with an alleged threat to their well-being will produce a powerful emotional response that can override reason and prevent a critical assessment of various exceptional policies (Ibid.). Propaganda research indicates that decision makers can shape perceptions of mass audiences and promote consent to state control measures. The public

²⁸ The slogan “There is no alternative” (TINA) was often used by the Conservative British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, to signify her claim that the market economy is the only system that works, and that debate about this is over (Berlinski, 2011). In recent years, the phrase has been widely used in financial markets (Robinson, 2013).

information about the need for exceptional measures to combat fear is directed by governments, who are significant actors in defining problems and setting political agendas (Altheide, 2006, p. 417).

Corey Robin (2006) shows how fear is an exemplary instrument of repression and plays an increasing role in our daily lives by justifying a growing number of ambivalent policies. “Fear is indeed a thief” John Keane says (2001), “it robs subjects of their capacity to act with or against others”. Frank Furedi (2005) speaks about the culture of fear, which is underpinned by a profound sense of powerlessness, a diminished sense of agency that leads people to become passive subjects who can only complain that “we are frightened”. Politics internalises this culture of fear and political disagreements are often over which risk the public should worry about the most. Kioukoplis (2014, pp. 147–148) argues that the “reforms” imposed on Greek society in return for the “bailout packages” of the Troika “would have been unthinkable without the rhetoric and the politics of terror deployed in an undeclared state of exception”. Aris, a local activist and scholar who was aware of Agamben’s work, commented during our interview on the methods being used by the Greek state and neoliberal actors for fear to prevail:

We are experiencing for so many years now states of exception, empowered by a sense of fear. During the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens the motto was: ‘Do not speak, do not move and do not protest!’ During the financial crisis, there was fear that we will be kicked out of the euro currency with catastrophic consequences, if we do not implement as a country further austerity measures. During the refugee crisis the narrative that ‘refugees arriving are criminals, terrorists and a threat for national security’ is the most recent example.

Consequently, exceptional measures related to the “refugee crisis” were promoted as necessary in order to prevent, for example, “terrorists” from arriving to Europe (Carassava, 2018). In this way securitisation arguments are linked to “threats posed by criminal aliens” (Atak and Crépeau, 2013, p. 230). As Polly Pallister-Wilkins (2018, pp. 14–15) argues, these border policies not only enable the management of the “migration crisis” but also ensure the maintenance of a liberal order in Europe, in the face of socio-political opposition to refugees, growing xenophobia and a fear of increasing support for far-right parties. Furthermore, the

enforcement of securitisation policies on Lesbos is also linked to allegations against refugees' 'delinquent' acts, which I referred to in chapter 2, and which emboldens many locals to demand more surveillance measures to be implemented on Lesbos (see chapter 4).

The politics of fear and the securitisation of migration have played an essential role in Lesbos becoming an exceptional space, where the rule of law is systematically violated. As Atak and Crépeau observe (2013, p. 228), "in the name of urgency and survival, these measures often reach above and beyond the law and the ordinary political process". Butler (2006, p. 52) notes that some of the actors imposing these policies are legitimated neither by direct elections nor through established authority. In Agamben's terms (2005, pp. 57–58), legal order and anomie are reaching a point of indistinction. In that respect, in the next section, I focus on those border policies that, I argue, violate the rule of law in terms of legitimisation and democratic accountability.

3. The EU "border regime" as a "state of exception"

As I mentioned in the introduction to the thesis, in September 2015 the European Council referred to the implications of "the exceptional migratory flows for migration management" (European Commission, 2015) and the head of the UN refugee agency stated that "exceptional circumstances require an exceptional response. Business as usual will not solve the problem" (cited in: Clayton, 2015). To that end specific exceptional border policies and practices started being enforced, combined with a huge humanitarian and security intervention on the Aegean islands. I will argue in this section that through an externalisation (section 3.1) and, at the same time, internalisation (section 3.2) of the EU external borders an exceptional border regime has been established. This border regime consists of two non-discrete elements. Its first element is analysed in this chapter and relates to the enforcement of exceptional policies and measures, which have eroded the rule of law and remain lacking in legitimisation. The second element is analysed in chapter 4 and refers to the processes and practices enacted at the EU external borders and particularly on Lesbos, which are characterised by the intervention of multiple state and non-state actors, which enable this border regime.

3.1 The externalisation of the EU borders

The modern border regime has its origins in numerous fundamental principles of international and European law. According to art. 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948); (i) "Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and

residence within the borders of each state” and (ii) “Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country”. The 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention (UN General Assembly, 1951) followed by its 1967 New York Protocol (UN General Assembly, 1967) established the principle of non-refoulement²⁹ and consist of fundamental principles arranging the rights of people’s movement between states. While these rights are guaranteed and give the right for someone to immigrate to a country other than his/her own, they are conflictual with the EU border practices, which often results in an unequal application of law. This creates a gap between rights guaranteed under the law and their selective application within a border regime characterised by a state of exception (Lendaro, 2016, p. 148). As Annalisa Lendaro observes (2016, pp. 148–149),

The European border in the twenty-first century reflects a paradox; on the one hand, the European society wants to be one in which people move freely, but, on the other hand, human mobility has been accompanied by a set of methods for controlling and closing borders.

The above argument powerfully applies to the adoption in the 1990s of the Schengen Agreement (Schengen visa info, 2018). The Schengen Zone designates an area for the free movement of persons between signatory States, but also reflects a paradox; although any individual – citizen of the EU or third country national – once having entered the territory of one member state can cross the borders of other countries without identity checks (Kasperek, 2016), there is also an outwards shifting of border controls beyond the EU territory (Collyer and King, 2016). In that sense, the Schengen Agreement serves as an early example of the externalisation of EU borders. The notion of the externalisation of border controls is described by Frelic *et. al* (2016, p. 193) as:

Extraterritorial state actions to prevent migrants [...], from entering the legal jurisdictions or territories of destination countries or regions or making them legally inadmissible without individually considering the merits of their protection claims. These actions include unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral state engagement [...], as well as the enlistment of private actors. These can include direct interdiction and preventive policies, as well as more indirect actions,

²⁹ This principle forbids a country receiving asylum seekers from returning them to a country in which they would be in danger of persecution based on “race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.”

such as the provision of support for or assistance to security or migration management practices in and by third countries.

From this angle, EU policy makers, in order to control and stop border crossers before they reach Europe, impose immobility via “immobilisation strategies” (Franko Aas, 2007), by stranding border crossers inside transit and buffer zones. These strategies were perfectly expressed by Tony Blair, when he presented during the 2003 EU Thessaloniki Summit a policy paper named “A New Vision for Refugees” (Bright and Harris, 2003). He suggested the establishment of Regional Protection Areas, Protection Zones or Safe Havens, as well as Transit Processing Centres for border crossers on transit routes to Europe (Bright and Harris, 2003; Hess and Kasperek, 2017b). This proposal involved the denial of entry to unauthorised border crossers by returning them to countries outside the EU and close to their homelands (Ibid.). According to Jennifer Hyndman (2003, p. 168) the notion of “safe spaces” is not something new. It is a post-Cold War phenomenon which has been enforced in 1991 to Northern Iraq, Haiti and Rwanda. Safe havens reflect the deliberate political intention of a “preventive protection” (Ibid., p. 168), meaning the provision of humanitarian relief as far away as possible (Long, 2013).

The policies related to the externalisation of the EU borders rapidly flourished during and after 2015 (Ruhrmann and Fitzgerald, 2016; Hess and Kasperek, 2017b) and echo Blair’s vision of “safe havens”. The externalisation of the EU borders is pivotal within the European Migration Agenda of 2015 (European Commission, 2017) and policies stemming from this Agenda, such as the “hotspot” approach and the EU-Turkey Statement that followed. In 2015 the European Agenda on Migration addressed in the clearest way the externalisation of the EU borders by prioritising the enhanced cooperation of the EU with non-EU countries and the use of the “safe country” concept. It declared countries such as Libya (in 2015) and Turkey (in 2016) to be safe third countries (see section 3.3.2) for refugees’ returns.

One of the striking features about these policies is how rapidly they appeared and were enacted, reflecting a “crisis response” mode of policymaking in the face of rapidly moving events (Vradis *et al.*, 2019, p. 22). An interesting aspect for this thesis is that the EU also enforced externalisation policies by pushing borders inwards (Hess and Kasperek, 2017b, p. 63), which thus led to an internalisation of the EU external borders. Gradually Greece transformed from a traditionally in-between and transit country into a protracted waiting room (Iliadou, 2019b), and Lesbos into a prison island (section 3.4).

3.2 The internalisation of the EU borders

The adoption of the “hotspot approach” in 2015 and the closure of the “Balkan route” in 2016 are two of the primary policies that were put into effect by the EU and signalled not only the externalisation but simultaneously the internalisation of the EU borders. In early 2015 the European Commission (EC) published the European Agenda on Migration (European Commission, 2015), and introduced the hotspot approach. A hotspot was described by the EC as “an area at the EU’s external border which faces disproportionate migratory pressure” (Ibid.). However, the hotspot approach was not just a way for the EU to manage disproportionate migratory pressures, but also a political measure and tool that allowed the EU and Greece to declare whole regions, or even entire nation-states, under a state of emergency (Vradis *et al.*, 2019, pp. 20–21).

The hotspot approach not only led to an externalisation of the EU borders, by adopting the “safe third country concept”, as I argued before, but also turned the Greek islands and particularly Lesbos into securitised, militarised, and humanitarian spaces (chapter 4). In 2015, Moria camp was transformed into a “hotspot”, where heterogeneous actors managed the processes of migration flows (Kalir and Rozakou, 2016). The president of Moria village, which is situated almost next to Moria hotspot facilities, described during our interview how the hotspot approach was gradually imposed on Moria’s villagers:

Nobody ever asked us about the transformation of Moria into an open camp that would accommodate thousands of refugees [...] The government had informed us in 2014 that only a few hundred people will be accommodated there; now we have 10,000 people stranded only at Moria camp, which is a few steps away from our homes. After 2015 nobody ever came here to discuss with us our point of view.

The closure of the “Balkan route” in 2016 was a key measure that forced refugees to remain stranded in Greece and for hotspots like the one at Moria to become overcrowded. The Balkan route is a path for border crossers that usually begins in Turkey, then goes through Greece and then Slovenia or Hungary, towards northern countries like Germany, the UK, Norway and Sweden. The way through the Balkan route towards Europe began in 2012, when the EU eased its visa restrictions on Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and North Macedonia (Dockery, 2017). Greece’s role as a “transit country” was

crucial even before 2012, since the vast majority of border crossers through Greece were continuing their journey to central and north European countries (Georgoulas and Sarantidis, 2013). In 2015 and early 2016 almost one million refugees moved from Greece to European countries through the Balkan route. However, following several attempts at controlling border crossings along the Balkan corridor with the erection of walls (in Hungary) and a series of repeated border closures (in Austria, Serbia and North Macedonia), the Greek – North Macedonian border was eventually sealed off on 7 March 2016 (Vradis *et al.*, 2019) via increased surveillance and police brutality against border crossers (Human Rights Watch, 2016). Therefore, thousands of refugees were stranded at Idomeni, on the Greek side of the border with North Macedonia (Ibid.).

The closure of the Balkan route was mainly pushed by the leaders of the so-called Visegrad countries (Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic) and Austria (Ibid.). The shutting down of the Balkan route is not only a characteristic example of the internalisation of the EU borders, but also an illustration of the asymmetric power relations between Greece and the EU. While exploring the interaction between political institutions, Dion Curry (2015) considers the relational factors affecting governance and the degree to which actors are constrained by hierarchies. He suggests that the hierarchical nature of relationships among actors is decisive, in determining the level and space for power to be dispersed. Herman Bakvis (2013) notes that even in governance systems based on extensive collaboration, hierarchy is never absent; this is the case within the EU, affecting member states like Greece. Greece is a characteristic example showing how “the executive”, in Agamben’s terms – or in the present case study the EU institutions and actors – expanded into the Greek legislative sphere. The processes that took place between EU states and Greece before the closure of the Balkan route indicate that Greece was practically restricted to ratifying decisions being taken by external actors. For example, in February 2016 Austria hosted a meeting with Balkan states on the increased migration flows, to which Greece was not invited, which led to a diplomatic scandal with Greece recalling its ambassador to Austria (BBC News, 2016). In early 2016, speaking ahead of a crucial meeting in Brussels, the Greek minister of migration criticised other countries for “unilateral” actions that affect Greece. “A very large number [of participants] here will attempt to discuss how to address a humanitarian crisis in Greece that they themselves intend to create [...] Greece will not accept unilateral actions [...] Greece will not accept becoming Europe's Lebanon, a warehouse of souls, even if this were to be done with major [EU] funding” (The New Arab, 2016). In this way the Greek minister, as I will further analyse in chapter 5, was not just criticising the way Lebanon was

treated,³⁰ but most importantly wanted to make sure that Greece is not treated in the same way countries of the “global South” are treated; he wanted to highlight that some of the phenomena that have been witnessed in the global South, i.e. the erosion of sovereignty during international interventions, are now arriving in the global North. Correspondingly, the Greek Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras, reacted negatively to comments made by the EC president, Donald Tusk, after western Balkan countries closed their borders to refugees. “The Western Balkan route has come to an end, due to unilateral actions by certain countries. EU has no future if it goes on like that [...]. We expect D. Tusk, president of EU28 to focus efforts on implementing our common decisions and not encourage those who ignore them” (ekathimerini, 2016). Earlier, Tusk had commented that “irregular flows of migrants along Western Balkans route have come to an end [...] there is not a question of unilateral actions but common EU28 decision... I thank Western Balkan countries for implementing part of EUs comprehensive strategy to deal with migration crisis” (Ibid.).

The above actions also challenge the very essence of the rule of law. According to Human Rights Watch (2016);

Blocking someone from lodging an asylum claim based on their nationality is a violation of international law. This discrimination violates the right to seek asylum as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the right to asylum under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights [...] In addition, the European Commission has condemned Austria’s cap on asylum applications, calling it “plainly incompatible” with EU and international law. Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, and Macedonia should swiftly put an end to these policies.

Furthermore, as Lendaro (2016, p. 155) argues,

the governance of borders touches on issues of justice, which call into question the legitimacy of the European Union to decide who can move and settle freely in Europe and how they do so, while EU representatives increasingly struggle to balance the discourse of

³⁰ The protracted refugee presence in Lebanon is a primary topic in political and public discourse in Lebanon, with references regularly being made to the impact on the economy, unemployment and the environment (UNHCR, 2019a).

human rights and that of national and European security.

After the closure of the Balkan route, the Dublin Regulation system of the first country of asylum was put into effect. The Dublin system (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2013) determines which European state has the obligation to process an asylum application. Designated “first safe countries of arrival” for border crossers are responsible for processing asylum applications, which means that the burden falls disproportionately on countries, such as Greece and Italy, which are often the first safe countries that asylum seekers reach. Even migrants who try to subsequently travel to another country, will be returned to the first country where they were registered. However, in the case of Greece, invoking the Dublin regulation to enforce the return of migrants who try to subsequently claim asylum in other European countries, violates the rule of law. In the 2011 *M.S.S v. Belgium & Greece* case (2011) the European Court of Human Rights examined the compatibility of the Dublin Regulation with the European Convention on Human Rights regarding transfers from other European countries back to Greece under the Dublin II Regulation. The Court ruled that there was a violation of art. 13 taken in conjunction with art. 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)³¹ against Greece, and ordered a suspension of transfers to Greece, due to substandard asylum procedures and reception of asylum applicants (Amnesty International, 2016b). While transfers to Greece have been restarted in 2016, the living conditions of asylum seekers in Greece and the basic guarantees surrounding asylum procedures in the aftermath of the refugee crisis were and are still far beyond the basic standards (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2015, 2018b; Human Rights Watch, 2016; Amnesty International, 2017).

A few days after the closure of the Balkan route the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, warned that closing the route to refugees would not solve the problem. “The EU has to reach a deal with Turkey as Greece would be unable to bear the weight for long”, Merkel argued (ekathimerini, 2016). This led to the “EU-Turkey Statement”, and the enforcement of a restriction of refugees’ movement on the Aegean Islands, which I will discuss in the next sections. Although refugee arrivals significantly decreased, refugees are now stranded for prolonged periods of time on the Greek islands, and Lesbos has been transformed into a confinement zone (section 3.4). In the next sections I critically explore the legal nature of

³¹ According to art. 3: “No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”. Also, art 13 specifies that: “Everyone whose rights and freedoms as set forth in this Convention are violated shall have an effective remedy before a national authority...”.

these exceptional policies, which have determined the restabilisation of the EU border regime up to today (Hess and Kasperek, 2017a, p. 63).

3.3 The EU-Turkey Statement

Even though the hotspot approach was already included in the 2015 Agenda for Migration, it was only actualised after the implementation of the 18 March 2016 EU-Turkey Statement (Council of the European Union, 2016). According to this Statement, all new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey into Greek islands from 20 March 2016 would be returned to Turkey. These returns, according to the Statement, would take place in full accordance with EU and international law, thus excluding any kind of collective expulsion. Thus, migrants on the Greek islands who do not apply for international protection, or whose requests for international protection are deemed unfounded or inadmissible will be returned to Turkey by Greece, where all of them will be granted protection on a temporary basis. Moreover, for each Syrian returned to Turkey from the Greek islands, another Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to the EU. Turkey must also take all necessary measures to prevent the creation of new sea or land routes from Turkey to the EU; in return the visa requirements for Turkish citizens will be lifted by the EU and a 6-billion-euro funding of the “Facility for Refugees in Turkey” will be allocated to Turkey.

A crucial question that arose when this “deal” was reached was “how ‘temporary this arrangement would be” (Peers, 2016). Almost five years after the enforcement of the Statement it is undisputable that its initially “temporary” nature has turned out to be enduring and permanent and the EU does not seem willing to change this. As the Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris Avramopoulos, argued in 2019, “the results of our common European approach on migration speak for themselves: Irregular arrivals are now lower than before” (European Commission, 2019b). It is even more striking that although the EU stressed that the “migration crisis” is over with the vice-president of the EC, Frans Timmermans stating that, “Europe is no longer experiencing the migration crisis we lived in 2015, but structural problems remain” (European Commission, 2019b), the exceptional policies stemming from the Statement are still in effect (Squire, 2019).

As I argued in chapter 2, the notion of “crisis” was politically used in 2015 as an “instrument of power” (Agamben, 2013), in order for exceptional measures to be enforced that would otherwise be extremely difficult to be implemented (Roitman, 2014; De Genova and Tazzioli, 2016). These exceptional measures stemming from the EU-Turkey Statement have

now become the rule. As I show in the next subsections, the EU-Turkey statement is an exceptional policy that violates the rule of law: Firstly, because of the legality of the Statement, combined with important issues of an *ultra vires* legislation and secondly, due to the designation of Turkey as a safe third country.

3.3.1 The legal nature of the Statement

A first point to discuss is whether a “statement” can be a legally binding document, i.e. an international agreement having legal effects. Indeed, the EU-Turkey Statement has been criticised as a non-legal document or juridical international agreement; it is argued that the Statement is only a deal, an agreement for the mutual benefit of the two parties (Woollard, 2018), which, however, does not bind the EU Member States to implement it (Amnesty International, 2016a; Chios Law Bar, 2016; Refugee Support Aegean, 2018). As Thanos, a human rights lawyer on Lesbos argued, “The deal is not a Treaty. It is clearly a diplomatic arrangement and has no legal basis at all”. However, for the purposes of art. 263 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)³² (European Commission, 2007), the Statement does not have to be an agreement; it is sufficient if it constitutes an act intended to produce legal effects vis-à-vis third parties. To determine whether that is the case, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) (1981) looks at the substance of the contested measure. If that measure is “capable of affecting the interests of the applicant by bringing about a distinct change in his legal position” the measure in question can be subject to an action under art. 263 TFEU (Ibid. para. 9) and thus the form in which such a measure is cast is irrelevant. Moreover, according to art. 2(1)(a) of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (United Nations, 1969) whether a text is a treaty essentially depends on the intention of the authors, and not on its form or denomination. So, on first reading, the EU-Turkey Statement seems to constitute a binding international agreement.

However, there is still a question of whether or not the EU procedures for concluding treaties with third countries (European Commission, 2007) were followed. In order to consider the existence of an international agreement or Treaty, it is necessary for the agreement to have been concluded by the appropriate authorities, that is, those included in art. 7 of the Vienna Convention of the Law of Treaties (1969). As Gloria Arribas correctly argues (2017, pp. 306–307), the EU-Turkey Statement was concluded by the European Council, but “the Council has not been entrusted with the competence to conclude international agreements”.

³² TFEU forms the basis of European Union law, by setting out the scope of the EU’s authority to legislate and the principles of law in those areas where EU law operates.

This lack of competence constitutes a violation of art. 218 TFEU, a violation of the procedure. Specifically, the European Parliament's consent is required when an international agreement covers fields to which the ordinary legislative procedure applies. This is the case of the EU-Turkey Statement, which concerns the readmission of citizens of third countries. As Gatti (2016b, p. 1) notes, although the statement does not explicitly mention the word "readmission", it "clearly refers to this concept, because the definition of 'readmission' is in art.1 of the EU-Turkey readmission agreement". The EU's competence to enter into readmission agreements is explicitly acknowledged by art. 79 TFEU, which regulates the EU's 'common immigration policy'. According to Art. 218 of the Treaty, agreements covering fields to which the ordinary legislative procedure (art. 79) applies are to be concluded by the European Council after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament. However, the EU-Turkey Statement "was adopted in violation of the European Parliament's powers and of the democratic principle at large" (Gatti, 2016a, p. 1). In addition, art. 10(2) of the Treaty on European Union states that the European Council is composed of Heads of State or Government who are "themselves democratically accountable either to their national Parliaments, or to their citizens". However, no Parliament – either European or national – ever approved, or even read, the statement before it was adopted (Ibid., p. 2).

The recognition of the EU-Turkey Statement as an international agreement would also mean recognising that the European Council has a treaty-making competence. This would go beyond the system of attribution of competence within the EU (Arribas, 2017, p. 309). It is thus not surprising that the General Court of the European Union (GC) (2017) declared in 2017 that it had no jurisdiction over a case brought by three asylum seekers against the EU-Turkey Statement, by placing, as Toygür and Benvenuti argue (2017, p. 6), a clear distinction between the member states and the EU itself. The GC dismissed the cases on the ground that it lacked jurisdiction to hear them, because the EU-Turkey Statement was not an act of an EU institution, but that of the 28 Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the EU. As Peers notes (2016, p. 14),

[...] by acquiescing to Member States' action outside the framework of the EU Treaties and institutions, the institutions (including the Court) are shooting themselves in the foot. They give Member States a carte blanche for areas in which they themselves are competent to act, thereby not only rendering themselves irrelevant, but also

enabling Member State action which is ultra vires and devoid of democratic legitimacy.

Furthermore, the denial of the judicial review of the Statement by the Court of Justice of the European Union is another manifestation of the exclusion of migrants and refugees from the scope of the European rule of law. In some instances of the implementation of the Statement, the capacity of non-respect of migrants' human rights is openly exhibited as a sovereign performance and appreciated by European citizens (Kivilcim, 2019).

As a result, not only non-European migrants but also EU citizens have practically few opportunities for legal scrutiny of the Statement. As Gatti observes (2016a, p. 2), there is no public record of the debate on the 18 March Statement and neither European citizens nor national parliaments can gain a clear picture of the positions expressed by their own representatives. This is a characteristic example showing how Greece's legislative power has been absorbed by an EU executive branch. According to Toygür and Benvenuti (2017, p. 6), the EU-Turkey Statement was intentionally called a "Statement" and not an "Agreement", since it was never been approved by the European Parliament. The EU-Turkey Statement thus suffers in terms of legitimisation and democratic accountability, because it was adopted in violation of the European Parliament's powers and of the democratic principle at large (Gatti, 2016a, p. 1).

Agamben (2013), during an interview in 2013, argued that although he does not claim that the EU is an illegal institution it is nonetheless an illegitimate one. He argued that legality is a question of the rules of exertion of power, while legitimacy is the principle that underlies these rules. In the case of the EU-Turkey Statement there was a breach of the rules and procedures safeguarding the operation of the EU. The enforcement of the EU-Turkey Statement is thus a characteristic example of when the state of exception violates the rule of law and then becomes the rule indefinitely. Consequently, a rhetorical question arising is: How can a "Statement", which suffers in terms of legitimisation and democratic accountability, be legally binding? Apart from the legal process issues that render the EU-Turkey Statement illegitimate, there are also substantive legal aspects, which as I argue in the next subsection, violate some of the fundamental international law standards.

3.3.2 The designation of Turkey as a safe country

A key point of the EU-Turkey Statement is the recognition of Turkey as a “safe third country” and “a first country of asylum”. Practically the Greek legislature was constrained to urgently ratify a “deal” suffering, as I argued, in terms of legitimisation and thus not having the opportunity of negotiating it. A few days after the implementation of the Statement Greece adopted, under an “urgent procedure”, Law 4375/2016, in order to comply with the “deal” (AIDA, 2016). This Law forms the legal basis for returning asylum seekers back to Turkey, by introducing an initial admissibility test. A problematic exceptional ‘innovation’ of these policies is that before even considering asylum applications on their merits – according to the 1951 Geneva Convention – asylum seekers are examined by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO)³³, in order to assess whether Turkey can be considered safe for them. Those belonging to “vulnerable groups”³⁴ and those falling under the Dublin III Regulation concerning family reunifications were initially exempted from these procedures (Greek Council for Refugees, 2016). However, in 2016 Greece came under pressure from the European Commission to revoke even these exemptions (European Commission, 2016a; Amnesty International, 2017, p. 13), highlighting in this way the asymmetrical power relations between Greece and the EU (see chapter 5) and the absorption of the Greek legislative power by an EU executive branch. In legal terms neither ‘safe third country’ nor ‘country of first asylum’ are concepts found in the Geneva Convention (Amnesty International, 2017). Instead, these notions are a product of the EU’s exceptional policies on the asylum system. As Ruma Mandal explains (2016):

As a matter of international law, such removals are only defensible if circumstances are considered on an individual basis, effective protection is available in the country of destination and adequate procedural safeguards are available in both the inadmissibility process prior to removal and in the asylum system of the destination state.

However, these criteria are not adequately met in the case of Lesbos. As I found during my fieldwork the consideration on an individual basis of a return to Turkey was the exception rather than the rule and the inadmissibility process prior to removal was problematic.

³³ EASO is an agency created by European Union Regulation 439/2010 to increase the cooperation of EU member states on asylum, improve the implementation of the Common European Asylum System, and support member states under pressure. Concerning EASO’s mandate and role on Lesbos, see chapter 4.

³⁴ “Vulnerable” groups include unaccompanied minors, the elderly, persons who have a disability or serious illness, victims of torture, rape or trafficking, single parents and pregnant women.

Thanos, a human rights lawyer, emphasised during our interview that the aim of the admissibility test was to enable the Greek authorities and EASO to return to Turkey even those asylum-seekers who have a well-founded claim to international protection. He also pointed out:

Each decision by EASO concerning the admissibility criterion is literally a photocopy of its previous decisions. So, practically, returns to Turkey are not considered on an individual basis. It is not essential for EASO what an asylum seeker will claim. The whole process during the interview is based on a fragmentary extraction of his/her claims. If you say, for example, “while I was in Turkey I did not have food to eat and I illegally worked for 5 days to buy some food”, EASO will automatically claim that you found a job in Turkey, and thus Turkey is a safe country for you.

As many scholars have argued, these border measures can lead to collective expulsions and may not give asylum-seekers an effective opportunity to apply for international protection in the EU (Gatti, 2016a, 2016b, p. 1; Peers, 2016; Toygür and Benvenuti, 2017). According to Amnesty International (2016a), due to the designation of Turkey as a safe country almost all asylum claims can potentially be assessed as “unfounded” and “inadmissible” resulting in mass expulsions, deportations or readmissions back to Turkey.

Regarding the availability of effective protection in Turkey, the “safe country” concept is an oxymoron; although an aim of the EU-Turkey Statement was “to end the human suffering”, by returning refugees back to a “safe country”, there are numerous allegations against Turkey concerning systematic violations of human rights, a dysfunctional asylum system, inequalities in access to refugee protection, degrading living conditions and coerced expulsions of asylum seekers (Amnesty International, 2016a; Gatti, 2016a; Roth, Shetty and Woollard, 2016). As Alpes *et al.* note (2017, p. 9);

The EU-Turkey Statement runs a real risk of preventing refugees’ access to asylum and their right to protection against refoulement. In the light of Turkey’s disrespect for procedural safeguards and the principle of non-refoulement, Greece should not return asylum-seekers back to Turkey.

This constitutes a violation of art. 33 of the Geneva Convention (1949), which states that:

No contracting state shall expel or return a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

During 2019 Turkey hosted over 3.6 million Syrian refugees (UNHCR, 2019c), without estimating the thousands of refugees from other countries of origin who were also stranded there. Turkey, while party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, maintains the geographical limitation to the Convention only to people originating from Europe (UNHCR, 2019b). This restricted application of the Convention contradicts the Procedures Directive for determining whether a particular state is a “safe third country” (Zeldin, 2016). Also, one should keep in mind that in the aftermath of the 2016 attempted military coup in Turkey, almost 6,000 Turkish citizens have sought international protection in Greece (Stockholm Center for Freedom, 2018), while the number of pending asylum applications by Turkish citizens to EU countries had exceeded 17,000 by the end of 2018 (Erkuş, 2018). Thus, an additional challenge to the idea of Turkey as a safe country is the social and political conditions characterising the post-military coup era, including mass arrests, abuses, and violations of human rights and liberties of Turkish citizens (Amnesty International, 2018). In 2017 eight Turkish officers entered Greece to apply for international protection. The Greek authorities ruled that a deportation to Turkey would constitute a human rights violation, as the men would not receive a fair trial in Turkey (Associated Press, 2017). Paradoxically, while Greece recognised Turkey as unsafe for Turkish citizens it also recognised and legitimised Turkey as a safe country for asylum seekers.

To sum up, returning asylum seekers back to Turkey constitutes a direct violation of European and International law. As I argued, the circumstances of asylum seekers are not adequately considered on an individual basis, there is no effective protection in Turkey and the availability of procedural safeguards is problematic both during the inadmissibility process in Greece and in the asylum system of Turkey. Amnesty International (2017) observed that the EU can seek to assist Turkey to guarantee access to an adequate protection status and adequate living conditions, but “it is a straight-forward violation of international law, to construct an entire migration policy around the pretence that this is currently the case

in Turkey” (Ibid. p. 6). In the next section I refer to one more dimension of the EU-Turkey Statement, namely, the geographical restriction of refugees’ movement on the Aegean islands, which directly establishes the internalisation of the EU borders.

3.4 The “geographical restriction rule” and its lawfulness

The implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement explicitly targets Turkey and the Greek islands; as it characteristically states “all new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey into Greek islands as from 20 March 2016 will be returned to Turkey” (Council of the European Union, 2016). As I mentioned in the previous section, in order for the Greek State to comply with the terms and conditions of the Statement, it issued a few days after the Statement Law 4375/2016 (Ministry of the Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, 2016). According to art. 41(1d) “asylum seekers’ movement can be restricted to a part of the Greek territory after a decision by the Director of the Asylum Service”. In June 2017 the Asylum Service Director issued a regulatory decision (Efimerida tis Kyvernisis, 2017) imposing a geographical restriction on the islands of Lesbos, Rhodes, Samos, Kos, Leros and Chios. Under this exceptional policy, “a restriction on movement within the island from which they entered the Greek territory is imposed on applicants of international protection [...]” (Ibid.), who are not allowed to travel into the Greek mainland but are obliged to stay on the islands. The geographical restriction is only lifted for some specific cases and particularly for those receiving international protection, for Syrian applicants whose claims have been determined as admissible, for those who have applied for family reunification, and for some of the applicants who have been recognised as vulnerable by the authorities (Greek Council for Refugees, 2018). Nevertheless, as I found during my fieldwork, all of these processes are extremely bureaucratic and slow. As Lora, a lawyer assisting refugees, told me, “there are asylum seekers who have to wait for up to 18 months for their first interview to take place.”

The enforcement of the geographical restriction is an exceptional policy, which violates the rule of law for multiple reasons. First, the decision imposing the restriction on the islands is imposed indiscriminately, without any prior individual assessment or proportionality test (see: UN Human Rights Committee, 1999). The Greek Council for Refugees (2018) notes that,

The geographical restriction in the asylum procedure is applied indiscriminately, en masse and without any individual assessment. The impact of the geographical restriction on applicants’

“subsistence [...], physical and mental health”, on the ability of applicants to fully exercise their rights and to receive reception conditions is not assessed.

Moreover, as many legal practitioners pointed out during a conference on migration that I attended on Lesbos,³⁵ the geographical restriction is imposed indefinitely, with no maximum time limit provided by law. Likewise, there is no effective legal remedy provided in order to challenge this geographical limitation, contrary to Article 26b (par.1) of directive 2013/33/EU (The European Parliament and the Council, 2013; Greek Council for Refugees, 2018).

The practice of the indiscriminate imposition of the geographical restriction against every newly arrived person on Lesbos has led to huge overcrowding and turned Lesbos into a prison island (Iliadou, 2019b). At the end of 2019 more than 21,000 refugees were stranded on Lesbos (Avraam, 2019). People are obliged to stay for prolonged and indefinite periods of time in overcrowded facilities, where food and water supply is insufficient, sanitation is awful and security highly problematic (International Rescue Committee, 2016; Médecins Sans Frontières, 2018b). This reality has a negative impact on asylum seekers' lives and can lead to uncertainty, distress, anxiety, hunger strikes, self-harm, and deaths (Iliadou, 2019b). In a joint press conference the representatives of five islands' bar associations, and the NGO 'Greek Council for Refugees' (GCR), stated that the geographical restriction imposed violates the principle of human dignity and as Anthippi Zannara, the head of Chios association, said “we refuse to allow our islands to be transformed into prisons with the aim of stopping the flow of migrants to Europe” (Kontarinis, 2018).

In February 2018, GCR (2018) lodged an application for annulment against the geographical restriction before the Council of State. The Court (Council of State, 2018) ruled that the imposed restrictions on refugee's movement should be lifted; these restrictions have resulted in a disproportionate concentration of migrants in specific areas rather than equitable distribution of the migrants throughout Greece, bringing “significant burdening and decline of those regions”. The Court also found that there are no “serious and overriding reasons of public interest and migration policy to justify the imposition of restriction on movement”. Surprisingly, the decision of the Supreme Court was never put into effect, since the director

³⁵ “The European conference on EU migration policy and its implications on borders”, Thermi – Lesbos, 06 October 2018.

of the Greek Asylum Service issued, a few days later, a decision reinforcing the geographical restriction, by claiming reasons of public order and security (Asylum Service Director Decision 8269, 2018). The legal paradox here is that an administrative body was legitimised to practically withdraw the ruling of a supreme court. This is one more example showing how administrative power expands into the legislative or judicial sphere and how the democratic principle of the separation of powers collapses (Agamben, 2005, p. 18).

Conclusion

In this chapter I analysed the refugee crisis and its aftermath as an illustration of Agamben's account of the state of exception. Nowadays, according to Agamben, the exception has become the rule, while legal order and anomie are reaching a point of indistinction and juridical measures cannot be understood in the sphere of law. The result is "a production of a paralegal universe that goes by the name of law" (Butler, 2006, p. 61), where various individual rights that individuals can enforce against the state can disappear. In that respect, according to Agamben, various populations can be abandoned by law and turn into "bare lives". For Agamben, we are perhaps all virtually *homines sacri* caught within a permanent state of exception. I argued for the need to move beyond Agamben's theoretical understanding and empirically explore the different degrees of the state of exception and abandonment by law. I argued that states of exception materialise differently in different places or for different populations and can generate multiple ways and levels of abandonment by law. I thus showed that refugees on Lesbos do not experience abandonment by law in the same ways that locals do.

I also argued that applying Agamben's perspective to the concrete example of Lesbos can deepen our understanding of the mechanisms through which a state of exception is enforced in contemporary societies. In the case of Lesbos, the politics of fear and the securitisation of migration have played an essential part in Lesbos becoming an exceptional space, where the rule of law is systematically violated in the name of crisis, emergency, humanitarianism and security. However, I have also moved beyond Agamben's understanding of the "state of exception", which suggests that the "state of exception" is imposed by a single sovereign actor, by exemplifying how sovereignty can be diffused and "a state of exception" can be imposed by diverse sovereign actors. As I showed, on Lesbos there are multiple sovereignties at work producing an exceptional space, and the combined effect of these sovereignties mirrors a single sovereign's effects. I thus argued that Lesbos needs to be

conceptualised as a particular camp and a “prison island”, where multiple sovereignties interact and frequently act as a combined single sovereign actor.

Moreover, for Agamben the state of exception challenges the constitutional division of state functions in modern democracies. In order to explore how Agamben’s theory applies to Greece and Lesbos I critically analysed the legal nature of various border regime policies and measures. I showed how the democratic principle of the separation of powers can collapse. I demonstrated that within the border regime the executive power or EU executive branches, like for instance the European Commission, have absorbed Greece’s legislative power or that the administrative power has expanded into the legislative or judicial sphere. Moreover, I showed how the border regime policies violate the rule of law, they are *ultra vires* and devoid of democratic legitimacy, public contest and debate. In this way locals and refugees – although not to the same extent – are abandoned by law, with their voices being overlooked by policy makers. The abandonment by law that locals experience has an important social, economic and psychological impact on their everyday lives, as I showed in the previous chapter. However, as I argued, despite being abandoned by law these populations are political actors, who exercise agency and have made significant achievements in preventing the enforcement of exceptional policies, such as for instance, the establishment of a closed detention camp on Lesbos in February 2020. Of course, as I also noted, the struggles against exceptional policies are not always united and when refugees, locals and humanitarian actors start acting collectively there is an increased chance for further positive structural change taking place.

In the next two chapters I elaborate on the consequences of the state of exception on a local level. In particular, in the next chapter I focus on the second element of the border regime, that is, the intervention of humanitarian and security actors on Lesbos. I explore to what extent these actors have decision making powers, how they interact with local populations, to whom they are accountable, and to what extent they are enabling border regime policies, thereby reproducing a permanent emergency and a state of exception.

Chapter 4: The humanitarian and security actors enabling the “border regime”

Introduction

In the previous chapter I focused primarily on the policy making level in order to explore how exceptional border regime policies violate the rule of law in terms of legitimisation. However, as Adam Ramadan importantly notes (2013, pp. 69–70), a thorough analysis of the operation of the space of exception requires an empirically informed approach, sensitive to the particular characteristics of real camps, the politics, people, relations and practices that constitute camps on an everyday basis. Hence, in this chapter I focus on what I have described as the second element of the border regime, namely the intervention and settlement of various actors on Lesbos. These intervening actors on Lesbos include different humanitarian and security institutions, agencies, organisations and persons who try to manage and control refugees. As Corporate Watch (2018, p. 43), a not-for-profit co-operative argues, the enforcement of the border regime relies on the intervention and settlement of these actors, and the combination of all these people’s actions shapes the border regime. As Fotini Rantsiou (2017) phrases it, international organisations can be described as “the operational arm” of the EU’s short-sighted policies”.

Consequently, in the next two sections I focus on some of the main intervening actors on Lesbos representing the humanitarian (section 1) and security (section 2) sectors and explore their role and why and how they enable exceptional border policies on the ground. In section 1, I introduce some of the main humanitarian actors on Lesbos and then discuss critical debates on the notion of humanitarianism and its principles. In relation to these debates I argue that, on Lesbos, humanitarian actors are both frequently demonised by locals (section 1.1), and that there is credible evidence suggesting that they have enabled exceptional policies on the ground in the past five years of the refugee crisis. In order to explore why this is happening I discuss their dependence on funding by their donors and how the interests of their donors affects their work on the ground (section 1.2). I then explore why and how some of these actors are silencing the injustices that the border regime produces (section 1.3). Next I focus on how the NGOisation on Lesbos has affected previous forms of resistance and solidarity, opening up the space for exceptional policies to be established (section 1.4).

In section 2, I focus on the security actors on Lesbos, whose main task is to “restore public order” (Council of the European Union, 2016) and deal with the “security challenges” related to the refugee crisis (Council of the European Union, 2015, p. 1). As the nature of their work is to enforce the law I will not focus on why they enable border policies but rather on *how* they enable these policies on the ground. I introduce these actors and I then explain how they are enabling border policies through a strengthened securitisation and militarisation of the borders and an overwhelming surveillance intervention on Lesbos. I elaborate further on the security actors’ role on Lesbos in the next chapter, when I explore their intervention on Lesbos as a form of colonialism.

1. The humanitarian actors on Lesbos and the principles of humanitarianism

In my introductory chapter I analysed the three phases of the humanitarian intervention that took place on Lesbos from August 2015 onwards. As Rozakou observes (2017, p. 102), this was the first time in history that an EU country had turned into the operation field for humanitarian organisations to such a great extent, in terms of the scale of the operation.³⁶ The humanitarian actors on Lesbos include humanitarian organisations, volunteers, activists, state and EU officials and agencies. The numbers of these actors reached their peak during the second phase of the refugee crisis. After the enforcement of the EU-Turkey statement in 2016, refugee flows decreased and some of the actors left Lesbos, while others reduced their working staff. However, many of these actors still operate on Lesbos; they have settled on the island and play an active role in the management of the thousands of refugees who remain stranded on Lesbos as a result of the “geographical restriction” on their movement.

International Organisations (IOs) and (International) Non-Governmental Organisations ((I)NGOs) are some of the main actors that intervened on Lesbos. Usually, locals do not distinguish between IOs and (I)NGOs, instead referring to all of them as NGOs. As I discussed with some of my interlocutors, for most of the locals, “NGO” was an unknown term before the refugee crisis. Locals invented the term “Mikiades” (*Μικιάδες*)³⁷, a neologism used to describe the humanitarian actors who arrived on the island due to the refugee crisis. Mitsos, a local activist commented that, “the term is often used in a snide or

³⁶ The case of the Former Republic of Yugoslavia, although at the time not an EU member, is one more contemporary example in Europe where various actors intervened. Nevertheless, this intervention took place within a different context characterised by a violent conflict (see: McMahon, 2017).

³⁷ MKO in Greek stands for NGO in English. “Μικιάδες” refers to those people working for NGOs.

even derogatory way, to show that NGOs are not doing their job effectively and their main concern is to take advantage of the situation on the ground and make profit”.

The three IOs operating on Lesvos are the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). IOM implements projects aimed at assisted voluntary return and reintegration, relocation to other EU member states, and site management support (IOM, no date). UNICEF has supported refugee and migrant children and their families in Greece since mid-2016 (UNICEF, no date). Among these IOs I focus in this chapter on the UNHCR, which assumed a leading role in the humanitarian relief operation, attracting additional funding and resources mainly from the EU. As Howden and Fotiadis (2017) note, “the UNHCR expanded from having an office with a dozen people in Greece, to a team of 600 people across 12 offices”. Concerning Lesvos’ office, the UNHCR’s spokesperson told me:

The UNHCR has been in Lesvos since 2010. We have a much larger presence now than in 2010 and we had an even larger presence during the peak in 2016, but we are increasing and reducing our footprint according to the operational needs. Up to the summer of 2017 we were pretty much involved in every aspect of refugee response, even substituting the state in some cases³⁸, at the request of the government. We used to do a lot of infrastructural interventions projects, groundworks, levelling, footings, bringing in containers, shelter, wash water, sanitation and hygiene. Since the summer of 2017 the Greek government has assumed full responsibility for managing refugee response, which means that we have handed over certain activities that we were doing in the past. We are now focusing on our core protection mandate activities, which are information provision on asylum and procedures to new arrivals and capacity building to the authorities.

As I observed during my fieldwork, the UNHCR on Lesvos coordinates six working groups. Meetings are held at the UNHCR office on Lesvos, in Mytilene, on a bi-weekly basis and focus on: protection; child protection; legal aid; sexual and gender-based violence; education and health. During these meetings the working groups, which mainly consist of (I)NGOs,

³⁸ In chapter 5 I discuss the substitution of the Greek state by international actors as a form of colonialism.

present their updates from the area that they are focusing on. Furthermore, the UNHCR coordinates the “Inter-Agency Consultation Forum”. This Forum was established in 2016 by Lesvos municipality and the UNHCR as an attempt to provide information to the various actors on Lesvos and create better cooperation among them. The meetings are held at the General Secretariat for the Aegean and Island Policy in Mytilene and are open to everyone. The Forum attracts various actors, ranging from EU agencies, surveillance actors, such as Frontex and Europol, and (I)NGOs to state and local actors, activists, journalists and researchers. The UNHCR provides first-hand information concerning the situation on Lesvos, as well as updates around legislation and policy changes. It also provides the bi-weekly official numbers regarding deportations, refugee arrivals and departures to the mainland, the situation in each camp or shelter and the numbers of people being moved from one site to another on the island. As Evi, an IO worker told me, “this is the only way for actors to meet each other and figure out who is doing what, while the UNHCR is their coordinator”.

Apart from the IOs on Lesvos, there was also a wide range of community-based, national and international NGOs.³⁹ Their working staff ranged from 4-5 individuals to 200-300 per (I)NGO. Their work depended on EU funding, collaborations between smaller and bigger NGOs, private donations and volunteers. There were NGOs from different continents; from Europe, the Middle East – mostly from Israel – and North America. Some of them were well-established organisations, others not. There were some faith-based organisations, many advocacy NGOs, many service delivery NGOs providing goods and services to refugees, but also many NGOs with multiple roles. Markela, an INGO representative referred to the NGOs, which have been “born on Lesvos, as a result of the refugee crisis”. As she explained, “you have UNHCR, OXFAM, UNICEF, DRC, Red Cross etc., but also other organisations that have been created in Lesvos, for Lesvos”.

The above-mentioned humanitarian actors play a crucial role in managing the refugee response on Lesvos. Nevertheless, the notion of humanitarianism and its principles has received considerable criticism. In 1965 humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality were codified as the seven “Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross” (British Red Cross, no date). The understanding of “humanitarian” that mainly became dominant in the 1990s has sought to define “humanitarianism” as “the impartial, independent, and neutral provision of relief to those in

³⁹ Concerning the names of some of the main registered (I)NGOs on Lesvos in 2018 see: (Pazianou, 2018).

immediate danger of harm” (Barnett, 2005, pp. 724, 733). However, these principles can be questioned, since many agencies are dependent on government funding and governments use aid for foreign policy and development goals. Michel Agier (2010, p. 42) argues that humanitarianism has become “an apparatus that fulfills certain political functions” and no longer has a moral function. Similar arguments suggest that since humanitarian aid is instrumentalised, politicised and manipulated, it is in reality “hardly neutral” (Donini, 2013, p. 6). As James Petras (1999, p. 429) argues, NGOs are significant world-wide political and social actors operating in rural and urban sites in Asia, Latin America and Africa, which are frequently linked in dependent roles with their principle donors in Europe, the US and Japan. However, reliance on any single donor is considered as a problematic practice among NGOs, because it ties their action to the politics of the donor, stripping an organisation of its independence, which is one of the seven humanitarian principles (UNHCR, no date b). In addition, projects are often designed based on guidelines and priorities of the various “imperial centres and their institutions” (Petras, 1999, p. 434). As Schuller notes (2012, p. 184), the moment an NGO director steps out of the sphere of permitted actions, the organisation can be disciplined, through the threat of power, in the pulling of funding. In relation to the refugee issue critical literature highlights that humanitarian actors have become the key partners of states attempting to implement and influence migration practices globally (Wolff, 2015). De Genova (2016) argues that the European “border crisis” has been depicted in depoliticising language as a “humanitarian” crisis and describing a situation as a “crisis” appears to be a device for the legitimisation of exceptional policies. In that way there is an oxymoron: humanitarian actors contribute through their focus and discourses on humanitarianism to depoliticising the consequences of the border regime policies but, at the same time, their discourses on crisis are highly politicised, in terms of justifying exceptional measures in the name of crisis (chapter 2).

Mary Anderson (1999) developed the concept of “do no harm” and suggested that humanitarianism can sometimes do more harm than good. Anderson's main point was that when international assistance is given in the context of a violent conflict, it becomes a part of that context and thus also of the conflict and may even prolong it. What applies in a “violent conflict” or war zone has many similarities with the refugee settlement context on Lesbos. As I showed in the introduction to this thesis the refugee arrivals during 2015-2016 turned Lesbos into a “war zone without a war” (Papataxiarchis, 2016, p. 5). In the aftermath of the refugee crisis the situation became even worse; demonstrations and clashes among refugees, locals and the police are taking place on a regular basis, while human suffering has

been normalised and routinised. This makes the situation on Lesbos explosive and constitutes a conflict without war.

The interaction between humanitarian aid and conflict was also explored by Hugo Slim (2001, p.329). He coined the term “Nightingale’s risk”⁴⁰ – the risk that humanitarian action is co-opted and actually assists a warring party or promotes war. Slim referred to the notion of humanitarianism as a device for the legitimisation of violence, by arguing that resources brought by humanitarians into a violent setting can support the violence, while the manipulation of “humanitarian propaganda” can be used to veil the horrors of excessively violent policies. A characteristic example of “Nightingale’s risk” refers to the relation between humanitarian agencies and blockaded populations. As Yanacopulos and Hanlon (2006) explain, in 1968 the state of Biafra had declared independence and was resisting the Nigerian military when the government imposed a siege on Biafra. UNICEF and ICRC were sending food in an impartial operation approved by the Nigerian Government, which then withdrew permission as it tightened the siege. By June 1968 there were claims that 3,000 people a day were dying. Oxfam and some Catholic agencies began shipping food; in August ICRC restarted its airlift without Nigerian government permission and by October other agencies were involved. Since then, however, many believe that this practice prolonged the war for 18 months and contributed towards the deaths of 180,000 people. Even though “Nightingale’s risk” was developed as a critique in the context of war, it is also applicable to the case of Lesbos. The thousands of stranded refugees on Lesbos are like blockaded populations during war and, as I argue in various parts of this chapter, the humanitarian assistance (e.g. necessities, cash assistance, accommodation) provided to them by humanitarian actors enables and prolongs an exceptional situation on Lesbos with devastating consequences not only for refugees but also for local populations. Finally, as I show in section 1.4 the notion of “NGOisation” (Choudry and Kapoor, 2013, p. 1) is also useful to reflect on in this chapter because it frequently contributes to a demobilisation of local grassroots movements, which would otherwise offer more active resistance to the enforcement of border regime policies.

In the next subsections I explore the above debates in relation to Lesbos, by analysing how humanitarian actors can enable exceptional policies on the ground. As I found during my

⁴⁰ Florence Nightingale worked in British military hospitals in the Crimean war of 1855–56 and contributed to the development of the nursing profession in Britain. She was strongly opposed to the founding of the Red Cross on the grounds that it would simply ‘render war more easy’. The Red Cross would make it easier for militaristic powers to go to war because they knew someone else would take responsibility for the wounded. In effect, the Red Cross would become an ally of the armies (Yanacopulos & Hanlon, 2006, p. 37).

fieldwork many locals were very critical of the role of NGOs on Lesbos. Although some of these criticisms were based on credible evidence and were well founded (subsections 1.2-1.4), other criticisms were based on speculations by locals and NGOs were used as scapegoats in relation to the consequences of the refugee crisis (section 1.1).

1.1 The demonisation and criminalisation of NGOs

The demonisation and surveillance of (I)NGOs and their workers is not a new phenomenon on Lesbos. Many of my former NGO colleagues and I have experienced this since 2008, when local authorities frequently intimidated and demonised us (see: Georgoulas and Sarantidis, 2013). However, after the refugee crisis this phenomenon has intensified. As Stratis, a local activist told me, “there is a demonisation of the practice of solidarity and NGOs. I remember the case of a woman who was killed in a car accident by an NGO worker. The discourses by locals I was listening to during this period was that, an NGO killed a woman”. As I noticed many of these accusations against NGOs were mostly based on speculation. A very common discourse by locals was that, “NGOs are bringing the migrants here”. A local official, for example, told me that “NGOs are helping migrants to arrive”. Periklis, a village president, mentioned that, “many refugees are arriving here and the first thing they are asking is ‘where is Mrs [...], the head of [...] NGO’. Is this a coincidence? The NGOs are organising migrants’ arrivals here”. Sofoklis, a local activist at the North coast of Lesbos, said that locals often tell us, “stop giving food to migrants! If you stop helping them, they will stop coming here”. Alekos, a local professional, said that, “if you visit the North coast, you will see that NGOs have watchtowers and they can see every boat approaching Lesbos. They cooperate with smugglers, by taking advantage of the absence of the Greek state”. Stavros, one of Lesbos’ vice mayors, mentioned that, “NGOs are a traction force for migrants and they are also the root of all bad things happening here. If NGOs settle on the smallest Greek island, migrants will follow them”. Eresios, a local stakeholder, told me rather intensely that, “90 – 95% of NGOs are criminals and they should be prosecuted, because they have a crucial role in human trafficking”. Giotis, another local stakeholder, said that “we all know for sure that NGOs are part of the international human trafficking chain”. Savas, a senior public servant working for the ministry of migration, argued that there are serious indications that “NGOs are traffickers”. He said that, “very often refugees are removed from their NGO shelter on Lesbos to the Greek mainland, and the next day the number of those arriving is exactly the same with those who have left, and they fill in the empty spaces of the shelter; is this a coincidence?”

In January 2016 five Spanish firefighters who had taken part in rescue missions on Lesbos as volunteers for an NGO were accused of trying to help refugees enter Greece. They were arrested by the Greek authorities and faced up to ten years imprisonment (The Guardian, 2018). The case received much publicity and gave rise to speculations by locals that NGOs are engaging with human trafficking. However, the Greek courts decided in 2018 that the accused were all innocent. During my fieldwork other rescuers from an NGO faced accusations of human trafficking, they were arrested and were put in pre-trial detention. Human Rights Watch (2018) commented that, “the criminal accusations brought by Greek prosecutors against activists for their efforts to rescue migrants and asylum seekers at sea appear entirely unfounded”.

The above narratives are linked with wider discussions on whether sea rescue missions are ‘encouraging’ migrants to cross borders. Italian courts, for example, had investigated whether smugglers finance rescue boats (Cinelli and Scherer, 2017). In December 2018, *Aquarius*, a vessel operated by *Médecins sans Frontières* and *SOS Méditerranée*, was forced to cease all rescue operations in the Mediterranean Sea following a criminal investigation opened by an Italian prosecutor in relation to trafficking. The narrative connecting NGOs with trafficking networks and the criminalisation of search and rescue operations is also connected to EU agencies’ narratives. Frontex, for example, has raised concerns over NGOs’ interaction with migrant smugglers (Robinson, 2016). It also relates to negative media coverage and police investigations for so-called “crimes of solidarity” and a number of EU politicians’ statements, which accuse NGOs of trafficking (Sigona, 2017). As Inma Vazquez (2019) notes:

Europe’s narrative has demonised NGO Search and Rescue [SAR] operations as ‘the’ key pull factor for irregular migration, as well as feeding smuggling and trafficking networks. But this narrative leaves out that, prior to the NGOs, SAR action was led by states. In 2015, NGOs had to step in when Italy decided to discontinue their *Mare Nostrum* operation. The obsession to stop any rescue has been taken to such an extreme that it has led to the freezing of the naval assets in Operation Sophia, the EU’s military mission created precisely with the mandate of combatting trafficking.

The above debates are also applicable to the case of Lesbos where, as I explained, unfounded accusations against the operation of NGOs are widespread. This misrepresentation of NGOs indicates that there is ignorance and also that NGOs are often used as scapegoats for the refugee crisis. Furthermore, as Mitsos, a local activist argued, it also relates to a general suspicion by locals of external assistance. As he explained, “following the intervention of the Troika during the financial crisis and the imposition of austerity measures locals have lost their trust towards external assistance”. However, as I argue in the next subsections, there are also credible arguments suggesting that humanitarian actors enable various exceptional border policies on the ground and play a crucial role in making these policies becoming enduring, which is a characteristic example of “Nightingale’s risk”. Humanitarian actors’ dependence on funding and their relationship with their donors is a first aspect to explore.

1.2 Funding dependence and the establishment of an intermediaries’ regime

During the refugee crisis huge amounts of money have been allocated to humanitarian actors in order to manage the thousands of refugees arriving in Greece. As a result, the humanitarian intervention in Greece is considered to be the most expensive in history when measured by the cost per beneficiary (Howden and Fotiadis, 2017).⁴¹ However, it is interesting to explore where this funding comes from, what the relationship is between humanitarian actors and their donors and how this relationship affects the way some humanitarian actors operate on Lesbos.

According to the independent journalism and community platform Refugees Deeply (2017), from 2016 until early 2017, \$803 million came into Greece, which includes all the funds actually allocated or spent, all significant bilateral funding and major sources of private donations. As I noticed during my fieldwork the work of many of the humanitarian actors on Lesbos depends to an extent on private donations and crowdfunding. However, the biggest pots of money are controlled by the European Commission (EC), which oversees the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the Internal Security Fund (ISF) (Howden and Fotiadis, 2017). The EC has allocated over €456 million in emergency assistance since the beginning of 2015. The emergency funding came on top of the €561

⁴¹ Howden and Fotiadis (2017) argue that the average amount spent per person is much higher in Greece than in other countries hosting refugees. For example, the funding allocated to Greece is ten times more per person than Egypt, and Egypt has about twice as many refugees and migrants. Howden and Fotiadis explain that there is a cost difference between Egypt and Europe, but that this alone does not account for the big difference in spending.

million already allocated to Greece under the national programmes for 2014 – 2020 (€322.8 million from AMIF and €238.2 million from ISF) (European Commission, 2018). The vast majority of this funding was allocated to NGOs as well as the UNHCR,⁴² which in turn allocates part of this funding to its NGO partners (UNHCR, 2018b). The UNHCR receives up to 99% of its funding from the EU (UNHCR, 2017a).

As I found during my fieldwork, the fact that the EU is the main donor for many of the humanitarian actors on Lesbos establishes a relationship of dependency and also enables these actors to act as intermediaries between local authorities, the Greek state and the EU, in order to embed border policies locally. In this way, an *intermediaries' regime*, as I would call it, has been established. Mark Schuller (2012) has referred to NGOs' roles as intermediaries in “gluing” the contemporary world system together and showing how power works within the aid system as these intermediaries impose interpretations of unclear mandates down the chain, a process Schuller calls “trickle-down imperialism”. Miraftab (1997, p. 369) argues that if NGOs financially depend on agents external to the beneficiary community they can hardly claim autonomy. As a result, the principles of independent and neutral provision of humanitarian aid are challenged. As I show in the next paragraphs some humanitarian actors frequently act as intermediaries between the EU, the Greek state and local authorities and enable certain policies and political agendas by becoming the “operational arm” (Rantsiou, 2017) of the EU's exceptional policies.

Practically speaking, in March 2016, a few days after the decision of the EU leaders to enforce the EU-Turkey statement, the UNHCR and some INGOs opposed this exceptional policy by deciding to suspend some of their operations in Moria camp. The main argument for this suspension was that their humanitarian work would be instrumentalised by policy makers. *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF) (2016), characteristically stated:

The EU-Turkey deal has changed the very objective of [Moria] centre. From a registration centre allowing people to leave the island and find protection somewhere in Europe, it has become a pre-removal centre offering insufficient guarantees for the respect of people's basic rights. In such context, we fear our assistance is going to be instrumentalised to allow for a mass expulsion operation and this is not acceptable for our organisation.

⁴² As I show in chapter 5 the Greek state was excluded from determining and monitoring this funding.

During my fieldwork I observed that MSF had not changed their stance, since they suspended their operations in the Moria hotspot. Nevertheless, this was not the case for the vast majority of humanitarian actors on Lesbos, which had made similar announcements (Michalopoulos, 2016; Oxfam International, 2016). Characteristically, the UNHCR stated that the EU-Turkey statement is being implemented before the required safeguards are in place in Greece and refused to get involved in the refugee returns to Turkey that the EU-Turkey statement was focusing on, claiming that the hotspots in the Greek islands have become prisons (Michalopoulos, 2016). Although the UNHCR and many INGOs acknowledged that the EU-Turkey Statement was against their humanitarian principles and was violating fundamental human rights, “the suspension of their projects lasted only for a few days”, as Evelina, a senior IO worker told me. Lora, an activist lawyer, argued that this happened because “there is a dependency relationship between these actors and the EU, which is their main donor; without the financial support by the EU they would not be able to keep their organisations going”. She added that, “for sure it is those well-established NGOs, EASO and UNHCR, which bring the European Commission policies to Lesbos”. By referring to the provision of legal aid, she explained that,

there are only 2-3 NGOs, including the one I am working for, which are legal service providers and their funding is not coming from the EU. For the rest this is not the case; so how much advocacy can they do against the EU politics? Our job is to advocate on behalf of people and when you are doing that political agenda you are not advocating on behalf of refugees.

She also compared Lesbos with Palestine, where she had worked before arriving on Lesbos. As she said,

there are unfortunately many similarities with Lesbos. In Palestine you have decades of this happening and a lot more money being imported to this humanitarian response to something that it is not a humanitarian crisis, it is a politically made crisis and NGOs focus on maintaining their presence there and justifying their continued work. It is the same with the NGOs on Lesbos; they are framing it in terms of humanitarian aid rather than looking at the reasons why this aid is

needed. They are focusing on the lack of provision of necessities without raising any substantial criticism of the policies that produce all these problems.

Focusing on the provision of necessities rather than criticising the policies that produce this enduring exceptional situation is linked to Nightingale's risk. In this way the provision of humanitarian assistance to refugees not only produces a limited version of what it means to be human, a "minimalist humanity" (Ticktin, 2006, p. 34), but also prolongs the exceptional situation on Lesbos. As Thanos, an activist lawyer told me, "the Greek authorities frequently argue that there are NGOs in the field providing humanitarian aid and as a result the whole situation is manageable. However, this leads to a vicious circle and an endless suffering for refugees, while Lesbos' local community is destabilised". During the UNHCR Inter-Agency Consultation forum meetings that I attended it was interesting to observe the stance of some of the NGOs focusing on crowd management and core site management services. Activists and local actors frequently referred to the violation of refugee law taking place and the fact that Lesbos had turned into a prison island as a result of the geographical restriction on refugees' movement. However, some of these NGOs were trying to present the whole situation as manageable, by not criticising policies such as the EU-Turkey statement. Their narratives focused on lack of provision of necessities and accommodation. This was a first indication for me that some NGOs that have a pivotal role in the refugee response were aligned with the EU exceptional policies, by simply avoiding criticism of these policies.

Various activists I spoke with criticised the operation of these NGOs within Moria camp. Vaso, a local activist, commented that through their operation in Moria in the past four years and by undertaking pivotal roles there, "they legitimise the operation of the hotspot on Lesbos, one of the worst camps on earth." Vaso's point of view echoes Anderson's (1999) argument that when humanitarian assistance is given in the context of a conflict, it becomes a part of that context and thus also of the conflict. As I showed in the previous chapter the "hotspot approach" turned Lesbos into a securitised space, by violating refugees' fundamental human rights and dramatically affecting local populations' everyday lives.

The argument that some humanitarian actors are aligned to their donors' expectations by embedding exceptional policies on the ground was very common during my conversations with local activists. Thanos, an activist lawyer, referred to a well-established NGO he used to work for. This NGO, he said,

is mainly funded by the EU to provide legal aid to asylum seekers. They were pushing us to handle 2-3 cases per week, which is practically impossible for a lawyer to accomplish. We had to raise objections against EASO's decision that Turkey is a safe country for refugees, but we did not have enough time to adequately defend each case individually. The NGOs' goal was to align with the EU-Turkey deal and return to Turkey as many asylum seekers as possible.

This NGO's practice, which Thanos referred to was practically aligned with the "fast track" border procedures, which is a product of the EU border policies. The aim is to return to Turkey as soon as possible asylum seekers for whom Turkey is supposed to be a "safe country" for international protection (chapter 3). As Miraftab comments (1997, p. 367), NGOs' activities are affected by their relationship with international funding agencies, because their funding comes with conditions and guidelines. As she argues;

[funding] is ear-marked for projects and issues of interest to the funder [...]. Hence, this signifies an allocative prioritization of such issues on NGO agendas, and therefore questions the degree to which the new foci of NGO activities reflect the needs defined by marginal communities and NGOs themselves, rather than organisations that fund them.

EASO, the agency that Thanos referred to is another characteristic example of an organisation acting as an intermediary, by enabling border policies on the ground. EASO cannot strictly be labelled as a humanitarian or security actor, because it is an EU agency which supervises the asylum procedures and safeguards migrants' rights to seek international protection. According to EASO (2019) its main role is to ensure that individual asylum cases are dealt with in a coherent way by all member States, by providing support in identifying asylum seekers. After the enforcement of the EU-Turkey Statement, EASO has deployed experts who are involved in the fast track inadmissibility procedure (chapter 3) in Greece, and also in the registration and examination of asylum claims on merit (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 2016). Nevertheless, these asylum procedures are directly related to policies such as the hotspot approach, the EU-Turkey statement and refugees' geographical restriction of movement. In trying to further explore EASO's involvement in

the Greek asylum service, I spoke with Savas, a senior public servant working for the Ministry of Citizen Protection. He argued that:

The real role of EASO is to act and behave as cops and watchdogs for the Greek authorities and administration and, at the same time, to enable the EU-Turkey deal in the most effective way by making sure that the Greek authorities comply with these new border rules. The impression that my colleagues and I have is that they have intervened to manage the refugee issue by considering the interests of specific EU member states and not Greece. They want to keep refugees stranded on Lesbos and no matter what they want to make sure that refugees are deportable to Turkey.

In chapter 5 I further discuss EASO's supervisory role on Lesbos as a form of colonialism. However, what is interesting at this point in relation to the above extract is the way an intervening actor is acting as an intermediary between the Greek administrative authorities and the EU in order to enable exceptional policies on the ground.

In a similar way, the UNHCR is one of the main humanitarian actors enabling various border policies. Even though a UNHCR spokesperson told me that after summer 2017 the UNHCR's focus is on "core protection mandate activities", this is not exactly the case. As I found during my fieldwork the UNHCR is still acting as a coordinator on Lesbos, it has decision making powers and has undertaken large-scale projects which are beyond its mandate, such as accommodation services, cash-based interventions and transportation activities. The issue of UNHCR's mandate has been criticised in the past, with several concerns being raised regarding its capacity to administer development while preserving its core mandate (Muggah, 2003), and its "use of an interventionist human rights discourse that complicates its basic role" (Barutciski, 2002, p. 366). As Frelick (2017) argues, preserving its core mandate would mean to "say no to supposed humanitarian solutions that deny refugees real choices and turn a blind eye to the realities they face". Critical scholars (Scheel and Ratfisch, 2014) have observed that despite the fact that the UNHCR's mandate focuses on the protection of refugees it has enlarged its field of activity by actively participating in the promotion, planning and implementation of migration management systems. As Athanasios, a lawyer working for an INGO told me:

The UNHCR on Lesbos operates beyond its mandate, there is a conflict of interest, because it is managing a situation, rather than focusing on its mandate, the refugee protection. Like it also happens with EASO, its motto is “support is our mission”, but this is not supporting if you have decision making powers and you also act as an intermediary.

As I observed, when (I)NGOs were expressing disagreements on procedural or legislative issues, the UNHCR was frequently acting as an intermediary between (I)NGOs and the Greek state. For example, in September 2018 the Ministry of Migration, in trying to decongest the island, issued a circular suggesting that for those asylum seekers who are recognised as “vulnerable” by the competent authorities, the geographical restriction on Lesbos can be lifted and they can thus travel to the Greek mainland. However, asylum seekers would also have to return to Lesbos at some point for their asylum interview to take place. This caused reactions by NGOs, who argued that if refugees travel to the Greek mainland, they will not have a shelter to stay and when their interview approaches they will not have the financial means to travel back to Lesbos. UNHCR replied by saying that they will communicate these concerns to the Ministry, in order for a different solution to be found. As Evi, an IO worker, told me, “the UNHCR frequently acts as an intermediary, because it has the power to influence decision making processes; it has the know-how and the government is relying on its expertise”. At the same time this also caused reactions by some locals. For instance, Alekos, a hotel owner, told me that, “the government wants to decongest the island and NGOs are putting obstacles again, because they do not want to lose their clients”. Giotis, a local stakeholder, highlighted that,

the UNHCR is funded by the EU and the EU wants refugees to remain trapped on the Greek islands. I am thus not surprised that the UNHCR is aligned with this policy. In their statements they say that Lesbos needs to be decongested, but practice shows that they are against this.

Mitsos, a local activist, commented on this argument by referring to the UNHCR which runs the EU-funded ESTIA accommodation scheme in collaboration with NGOs (UNHCR, no date a). As I mentioned in chapter 2, hundreds of refugees on Lesbos are the “beneficiaries” of this scheme. However, as Mitsos commented:

My impression is that the UNHCR and NGOs are among those actors enabling the geographical restriction of refugees' movement. I know so many refugees who are accommodated but also trapped in these apartments for years. If you speak with them you can easily understand that they are desperate and angry due to this situation. However, the UNHCR is aligned with the EU policies and keeps refugees stranded in these apartments in the name of humanitarianism.

As I observed during my fieldwork there were also hundreds of summer tents around Moria camp, where thousands of refugees were accommodated for a prolonged period of time. Each one of these tents had a label indicating that the donors were the UNHCR and the European Commission. Similar labels could also be found on the containers inside camps like Moria and Kara-Tepe. The above situation is linked to "Nightingale's risk". The provision of semi-permanent accommodation for refugees is aligned with the imposition of the geographical restriction on refugees' movement and keeps them stranded for prolonged periods of time on Lesbos. During this period refugees have no ability to work, to integrate into society and are thus excluded politically, economically and socially. This exceptional situation on Lesbos is thus prolonged with devastating consequences not only for the lives of refugees but also for the everyday lives of local populations (chapter 2).

In this subsection I showed how funding dependence makes various humanitarian actors align with certain EU exceptional policies and embed these policies locally. In the next subsection I argue that silencing various injustices that the border regime generates is an additional consequence of humanitarian actors' funding dependence.

1.3 Silencing the injustices generated by the border regime policies

Silencing generally refers to a situation where the state hides information through various gatekeepers (Maillet, Mountz and Williams, 2017, p. 930). Some of these gatekeepers can be humanitarian actors cooperating with the state and/or those dependent on state funding. As Malkki (1996) demonstrates humanitarian actors frequently represent refugees in terms of helplessness and loss, but this results in a de-politicised image of refugees. As I found during my fieldwork, the act of silencing injustices is an example demonstrating that humanitarian actors on Lesbos are hiding the violence and social harm that border policies

inflict upon refugees. Moreover, by being silent about the consequences of such policies for local populations, they are complicit in negating a further important dimension of these policies.

From my previous experience as a lawyer and from conversations that I had with former colleagues who have access to Lesbos' camps, I was aware of the violence and harm taking place inside camps. However, before starting my fieldwork I wondered why the humanitarian actors who operate inside Moria camp do not publicly speak about these issues. In August 2018, almost three years after the beginning of the refugee crisis, *Médecins Sans Frontières* (2018a) finally spoke publicly about issues of violence inside Moria camp and even about children who try to commit suicide. The other actors in Moria did not issue any public statements at all. As Mitsos told me, "the only thing they did was to indirectly support MSF, by not refuting their statements". When I spoke with MSF, they told me that they do not receive EU funding, and this gives them freedom to speak more openly, thereby showing how limiting the dependent relationship is between an NGO and a donor. Stelios, an NGO worker and activist was very critical to the role of the UNHCR and some NGOs in silencing injustices:

UNHCR and some big NGOs are trying to control activists and NGO workers. They told us 'you are not allowed to put out information'. What gives them the right to do this? The damage that has been done is by NGOs. They have found a way to control everyone, by breaking up the independent groups and NGOs. The UNHCR is saying 'you cannot associate with this person because this person is under the suspicion of trafficking', so you have to push them out and the small NGOs are doing it, because they are furious. One NGO tried to destroy us, they wanted to take over everything. Afterwards we noticed that this was run by the influence of UNHCR.

Nikos, referred to the restrictions he faces, as a representative of a well-established INGO:

During the last months my NGO participated in an advocacy group, organised by activists and NGO members. Activists and some community-based NGOs condemn the EU-Turkey deal, but for us, as representatives of bigger NGOs this is not the case. We say, 'we

agree with you, but we are not allowed to officially condemn these policies.’

Ioanis, who arrived on Lesbos in 2016 as an activist criticised the relationship between some humanitarian actors and the EU. As he said, “the UNHCR and its NGO partners are funded by the EU. How can they say to the EU that ‘your policies produce injustices’?” Similarly, Stratis, an NGO worker and activist referred to some small local NGOs, which “within some months became huge”. As he said, “without any experience they were suddenly managing millions of Euro coming from the EU. How are these NGOs supposed to criticise the negative outcomes of these EU policies? The EU is practically their boss”. Howden and Fotiadis (2017), by referring to the UNHCR note that:

The decision to take a role in the Greek crisis also put the UNHCR on a collision course with one of the core elements of its mandate: to advocate for the rights of refugees. Operating for the first time on this scale inside the EU, which is also the organisation’s second biggest funder globally, the UNHCR faced a dilemma over criticising its donors. Instead of advocating for the protection of refugees they remained silent for fear of the political consequences [...] Even if they wanted to criticise policy that violates their principles, they could not.

During my fieldwork I had an interesting conversation with Stelios and Anna, two radical activists on Lesbos, who have shown solidarity with refugees over the past 15 years. Much of our discussion concerned the role of the UNHCR and Stelios, using the word “disgusting” eleven times, referred to the UNHCR’s role in silencing injustices that were committed against refugees. One of the first things he told me was that, “the UNHCR is a big part of the problem”. As he explained:

In January 2017 we had a meeting at the North coast with around 50 activists and NGO workers. Someone came and said, ‘I am the head of the UNHCR at the North coast and I will not have anyone putting stuff on social media; you will stop this right now; I will not have anyone saying the food in Moria is not good, because there is nothing wrong with the food in Moria, I will not have anyone saying the accommodation in Moria is not good, because the accommodation is

perfect’. This was silencing, because the situation at Moria is exactly the opposite.

In the next subsection, I elaborate more on the issue of silencing by correlating it to the notion of “NGOisation” and the professionalisation of resistance. I also explain how the “NGOisation” of resistance has given further space for exceptional policies to be embedded locally.

1.4 Enabling the border regime through the “NGOisation” of resistance

According to Aziz Choudry and Dip Kapoor (2013, p. 1), the term NGOisation “is commonly used among many social movements, activist networks and academics to refer to the institutionalisation, professionalisation, depoliticisation and demobilisation of social movements”. By considering the NGO phenomenon in a broader political context, Arundhati Roy (2004) argues that NGOs “alter the public psyche, they defuse political anger and dole out as aid or benevolence what people ought to have by right”. Feminist scholars have criticised NGOisation in relation to women’s movements. For example, Islah Jad (2004, pp. 34–38) claims that in many cases NGOisation has distorted the structure of women’s grassroots movements. Sonia Alvarez (2009, p. 176) argues that NGOisation, during the 1990s, entailed national and global neo-liberalism’s active promotion and official sanctioning of particular organisational forms and practices among different sectors of civil society.

NGOs have also been accused of frequently undermining local and international movements for social change and/or oppositional anti-colonial and anti-capitalist politics, in complicity with state and private sector interests (Choudry and Kapoor, 2013, p. 2). Mike Davis (2007, pp. 76–77) argues that the “true beneficiaries” of interventions have been the thousands of NGOs rather than local populations. By considering the actual interests and legitimacy of NGOs, their links to the states that fund them and their compliance with funding agency targets the question of whom NGOs are accountable to becomes crucial. De Jong & Ataç (2017, p. 31) show how “social initiatives that become institutionalised as NGOs can lose their autonomy due to dependence on direct and indirect state funding, increasing susceptibility to co-optation”. As they found in their research, the lack of funding and embeddedness in the mainstream NGO scene provided KAMA – a refugee support initiative – with an important degree of autonomy. Miraftab (1997, p. 367) argues that accountability to the funder and periodical evaluation of projects by funders has influenced the concern of

NGOs with professionalism of their organisations. She explains that in order for some NGOs to comply with donors' expectations they have hired technical staff primarily based on their technical capabilities, rather than on their commitment to social change. Generally speaking, the professionalisation of humanitarianism or resistance can diminish the mobilisational feature of grassroots movements. There are arguments suggesting that NGOs' move away from idealism and voluntarism, towards a corporatism in which they operate more like contractors or consultancy firms. According to Petras and Veltmeyer (2002, p. 20), the professionalisation and depoliticisation of community-based NGOs "work well for neoliberal regimes; it serves to keep the existing power structure intact while promoting a degree of change and development".

Of course, there are counter arguments suggesting that professionalisation can be of benefit to an NGO's beneficiaries by providing better services to them (Miraftab, 1997). As a former member of a local grassroots movement on Lesbos and currently an NGO member told me, "in the past I did not even know the difference between migrant and refugee. Now that I am working for an NGO I have been trained and can help refugees more efficiently than in the past". Also for locals on Lesbos who became unemployed as a consequence of the financial crisis, working for an NGO was a "kind of solution" (Cavafys, 1904) for many of them. Furthermore, as Roth observes, some people choose to leave their corporations – the business sector – in order to find more meaningful work in humanitarian and development organisations (Roth, 2015, p. 34). This was something that I observed happening on Lesbos for some NGO workers. From my own perspective, as a former NGO worker, the above arguments are valid and indeed professionalisation has benefits for both NGO workers and their beneficiaries. However, an in depth understanding of how the exceptional border regime on Lesbos is materialised and becomes enduring requires a critical approach and a thorough analysis of the consequences of NGOisation.

In the years before the refugee crisis Lesbos was characterised by very active grassroots movements. Although I do not imply that the past on Lesbos was political, radical, 'spontaneous' and 'real', while the present is apolitical, professionalised, 'careerist', and individualised (Roth, 2015, p. 346), my understanding from my fieldwork was that the NGOisation of resistance has affected the way locals resist the exceptional border regime policies. As result, through the process of NGOisation, certain exceptional border policies are indirectly enabled on the ground.

A first issue is how former grassroots movements on Lesbos became professionalised and how this affected their resistance to exceptional border policies and their struggles for social change. Before 2015 and during the first year of the refugee crisis there were various local grassroots movements on Lesbos that showed solidarity towards refugees. They organised reception facilities, provided necessities such as water, food and clothes; most importantly they supported refugee's freedom of movement and resisted the border regime policies and human migration control by coordinating international border camps, demonstrations, protests, direct actions, and anti-deportation campaigns. These people are referred to in Greece with the neologism *allilegii* (αλληλέγγυοι), which can be translated as *solidarians*. As Mitsos, a local activist told me, these *solidarians* were, on the one hand, the “good Samaritans”, locals who had memories of refugeeness, because their ancestors were refugees who arrived on Lesbos in the aftermath of the Asia minor catastrophe (chapter 1), and people evoking their Christian Orthodox values related to altruism. Their contribution, as he explained, was mainly unconditional and was based on pure humanism. Furthermore, he mentioned that a third important section of *solidarians* were local activists, who were politically motivated and were critical of the border regime policies. Most of them were part of pre-existing social networks on Lesbos, many of which were transformed into NGOs in the aftermath of the refugee crisis. During 2015 and early 2016 solidarity networks for refugees on Lesbos flourished. As Rozakou observes (2017, p. 102),

in 2015 Lesbos became a symbol of extensive ad hoc support and solidarity with the refugees [...]. Local grassroots movements and citizens, independent volunteers and solidarians worked together [...]. Many of these initiatives were acting independently by refusing to accept any form of subsidies from the Greek state, the EU or private companies.

Marie Gillespie (2018), who has researched solidarity on Lesbos, distinguishes three main ways in which solidarity manifests itself on the island. The first one is political solidarity,⁴³ which is an outcome of both the financial and refugee crises, and forced people to come together, to share problems and to find solutions. The second is historical and biographical solidarity, which relates to the fact that around 60% of Lesbos' locals have refugees within their families, as a result of the population exchanges between Turkey and Greece in 1922;

⁴³ According to Sally J. Scholz (2008) political solidarity, in contrast to social solidarity and civic solidarity, aims to bring about social change by uniting individuals in their response to particular situations of injustice, oppression or tyranny.

this creates, as she says, a reciprocal nature to the solidarity that exists on Lesbos. Finally, Gillespie identifies social solidarity, by referring to examples such as the ways through which women have supported each other. As I argue, the intervention of humanitarian actors on Lesbos and their interactions with local initiatives has altered pre-existing forms of solidarity and especially political solidarity.

At this point it is important to clarify that the NGOisation of resistance cannot explain on its own the reasons why solidarity on Lesbos has altered. For instance, the huge numbers of refugees remaining stranded on Lesbos combined with the normalisation and routinisation of refugees' everyday suffering has affected the stance of some locals whose solidarity was based on pure humanism or on their own memories of refugeehood. Panagitsa's point of view is a characteristic example. As she told me, her voluntary work in the past was based on pure humanism and on her beliefs as an Orthodox Christian. However, "three years after the beginning of the refugee crisis I feel exhausted and tired, I cannot help anymore", she told me. Concerning political solidarity, as I explained in chapter 2, many committed activists and volunteers on Lesbos dropped out of social networks because they were psychologically exhausted or had burnt out. Others, including myself, dropped out due to the enduring intimidation they were experiencing by the Greek authorities or even right-wing locals. Nevertheless, as I show in the next paragraphs, the NGOisation of resistance still plays a pivotal role in the way collective networks and solidarity operate on Lesbos.

One of the first things that attracted my attention during my fieldwork came through when I started meeting people from my pre-established network. Many of them used to be radical activists and members of former local networks. They had known each other for many years and had spent hundreds of hours together in political discussions and local assemblies. However, when I started speaking with each one separately, I noticed that this relationship had changed for some of them. This had effects not only on an individual level, but most importantly on a collective level. Most of these people had started working for INGOs and others for NGOs that they established themselves during the refugee crisis. Some of them were unemployed in the past and their professional engagement with the refugee issue was an opportunity for them to financially survive. However, they were no longer part of a broader local network on Lesbos, as they used to be in the past. Some of these individuals were now focusing on their own NGO activities.

As I explained in my methodology chapter, I felt sceptical and uncomfortable to observe that former colleagues and friends were blaming or even accusing each other, for various reasons ranging from issues of transparency or misappropriation of funds, silencing, hierarchical relations and authoritative behaviour. Thekla, an IO worker and activist told me that, “they have now become a part of the refugee industry and there is conflict of interest among them. They have been separated into small groups and each group has established its own NGO. In a sense, there is antagonism among them”. Vaso, a local activist, highlighted that there is an alienation among many of the former grassroots members and it is like that “they have been separated into different cliques”. She referred to various examples, when common social initiatives took place on Lesbos, where NGO members and former members of grassroots movements were participating. “Each one wanted to attend the events which were organised by his/her organisation. They were leaving afterwards, without staying to attend the other NGOs’ gatherings. Some of them even confessed that they came to participate in their own NGO’s initiatives.”

This alienation among these former *solidarians* was a first indication of some of the consequences that the NGOisation on Lesbos has at a collective level. As Vaso told me, the fact that they were now professionals meant that they were now working from 9-5, sometimes even overtime, but this new reality was not allowing them to further engage with political solidarity. “They return at home after work and they are exhausted”, she told me. Malathi de Alwis (2009, p. 86) referring to the institutionalisation and professionalisation of feminism in Sri Lanka observed that with the flood of international humanitarian aid one can now find employment as a ‘full-time feminist’. As she argues, although this reality has lent a certain stability to feminists’ lives and has enabled them to concentrate fully on their activist work, it has also produced new “comfort zones”. Sometimes the need to sustain such institutions becomes the primary concern of feminist activists at the cost of the activism that they may have originally sustained.

Another interesting issue related to the process of discussions and assemblies among different grassroots groups. Before 2015, when I was living on Lesbos, these gatherings were very frequent, with various *solidarians* participating. I thus explored what was the situation with the former local network, called the “Village of All Together”,⁴⁴ which has now

⁴⁴ “The Village of All Together” was a local network of 27 different movements and organisations on Lesbos (*Lesvossolidarity.org*, no date). The network was established to coordinate the various initiatives on Lesbos working in the context of the Greek financial crisis. Also, in response to the growing number of refugees arriving and their housing needs, its members occupied the site of PIKPA. PIKPA is a space near Mytilene

transformed into an NGO. The assemblies of the Village of All Together used to be open to everyone. So, I asked if I could attend one of these assemblies. Vaso, an activist from Lesbos, informed me that, “these assemblies are no longer open to everyone. You need to be a member of the NGO. For you, of course, it might be different, because you are one of the founding members and they cannot exclude you”. She also told me that even between the two different NGOs that were born after the “collapse” of the Village of All Together, people gather in different meetings and they consider each NGO to be something separate. As she explained;

At some point, members of both NGOs gathered, to do psychotherapy with some experts from another NGO. When we started discussing we realised that we had no idea what each NGO was doing, what were the problems and worries of each one of us separately. It was like saying to each other that, ‘this is my own field and stay out of it’.

Ioanis, an activist who used to work at PIKPA critically spoke about the operation there of one of the well-established INGOs on Lesbos. As he said:

They had funded PIKPA, despite the objections by many of us, who did not want to depend on funding by bigger NGOs. The decision for this cooperation was taken by a small group of people. But when you allow someone to fund you, it is like you let them buy you. I then realised that for some people of the network, PIKPA had become an enterprise, their own business, where decisions were not taken collectively anymore.

Nikos an NGO worker and former member of PIKPA, characteristically told me that “PIKPA is not the radical local collective it used to be and tends to become an enterprise”, echoing in this way the argument that “some NGOs have roots in popular progressive social movements, but have been disconnected from them and institutionalised” (Choudry and Kapoor, 2013, p. 7). The above extracts I referred to are characteristic examples of how

which previously operated as a children’s camp. The Municipality ceded PIKPA and volunteers transformed the space into hostels for vulnerable groups of refugees, hosting even 600 refugees a day and offering medical, psychological and practical assistance. In 2016, the Village of All Together was transformed into an NGO, called ‘Lesvos Solidarity’ and in June 2016 Lesbos Solidarity developed one more NGO, the Mosaic Support Centre. These NGOs are funded by private donations and by other INGOs.

political activism and democratic procedures (e.g. assemblies open to everyone) have been affected by the professionalisation of humanitarianism or resistance. As Arundhati Roy (2004) observed, “NGOs have funds that can employ local people who might otherwise be activists in resistance movements, but now can feel they are doing some immediate, creative good (and earning a living while they’re at it).” Of course, the everyday reality on Lesbos indicates that for many former activists on Lesbos, working for an NGO is a means of economic survival. Furthermore, their professional engagement with the refugee response does not mean that they have completely abandoned their radical background. Aris, a local radical activist, told me by referring to PIKPA that “for sure its members have lost part of their political voices, but they still remain a shining example of how an NGO wishing to bring social change should operate”.

What I also found to be interesting was the notion of immobilisation that NGOisation generates. Mina, a radical activist, referred to various examples when refugees decided to demonstrate and oppose the border regime policies, but NGOs were trying to persuade them to return to their camps. She also noted that this has also happened with PIKPA, the former “Village of All Together”. Thanos, a local activist, confirmed Mina’s impressions of PIKPA. As he said,

Refugees and solidarians had occupied the office of Syriza on Lesbos, by denouncing the geographical restriction regime. One of PIKPA members, who is on the top of the hierarchy, told me that such initiatives are against human rights, because we pass the message that if we demand human rights we have to occupy squares and offices of political parties. For me this is exactly what depoliticisation of solidarity means.

Kloni, a local activist from the north of Lesbos referred to the case of *Platanos*, an independent initiative by activists at the village of Skala Sykamnias, which was operating horizontally until the enforcement of the EU-Turkey Statement (it closed afterwards, because refugee arrivals at the north coast decreased). She highlighted the pressures brought to bear by state and humanitarian organisations for *Platanos* to cooperate with NGOs. *Platanos* resisted and did not accept any kind of cooperation, but this was not the case for other initiatives or small NGOs, which have been co-opted by well-established NGOs or IOs.

The process of co-optation (for a detailed account of this process see: de Jong and Kimm, 2017) is useful for this section to describe the outcomes of social movement interaction with dominant partners, such as well-established NGOs. Selznick uses the term “blunting” to describe the deradicalisation of movement claims which become aligned with dominant institutional requirements (Selznick, 1949, in de Jong and Kimm, 2017). Others (Castro, 2001, p. 17; Alvarez, 2009), argue that NGOs are institutionalised branches of grassroots movements that had been co-opted by the powers they once criticised. As I explained, many solidarity networks on Lesvos were turned into NGOs and these NGOs established partnerships with bigger NGOs or IOs. Similarly, pre-existing local NGOs also established partnerships with bigger humanitarian actors. Although this transformation provided more funds for these initiatives and improved their services for refugees, it also had implications in terms of criticising the border regime, because their strategy had to be aligned with that of their donors. One way to achieve this goal was through restrictions in NGO workers’ contracts, which prohibited them from engaging with more radical work and thus criticising aspects of the border regime policies. Zak, a radical activist on Lesvos, told me a characteristic story, describing how activists’ voices can be silenced as soon as they start working for an NGO:

We were travelling by ship from Lesvos to Athens to show solidarity to refugees who were transferred with the potentiality of being deported back to their countries. When we arrived in Athens and the police were ready to transfer the refugees from the ship to a van, we decided to start shouting some slogans like, ‘No borders, no nations, no deportations’ etc. Together with us a group of young NGO workers was travelling, and it was obvious that they wanted to join us. However, they didn’t. They were working for one of the NGOs on Lesvos and, as they told us, limitations in their contracts were not allowing them to engage with political narratives and discourses!

This is a practice that NGOs follow in other countries too. For example, as de Jong (2018, p. 6) observes, “Migrant Help” an NGO, which is the single supplier for Asylum Support Services in the UK, was asking their staff to sign a clause in their contract that they would not advocate on behalf of their clients. During my fieldwork I further researched this practice that NGOs follow, and I found that this is taking place both directly, meaning by a contract

imposing restrictions on how an NGO worker can publicly speak, but also indirectly. As Halid, an NGO interpreter told me, “practically speaking, if my NGO notices that I have joined a demonstration there is a likelihood that they will fire me or that they will not renew my contract. Most importantly, you are afterwards on the ‘blacklist’ and no other NGO will ever hire you”.

I also noticed the absence of NGO workers when I joined two demonstrations during my fieldwork. When I asked a former colleague about it she told me that, on the one hand, they want to distance themselves from the refugee issue because some of them are “burned out” and, on the other hand, that they prefer not to be politically involved, or engage in more radical work than the work they are doing for their NGOs, because they are afraid that they might lose their job. Tasia, a former advisor at the Ministry of Migration, emphasised that;

until the end of 2015 solidarity was very intense. All these movements have now vanished, due to the professionalisation of solidarity. Solidarity networks became NGOs and they consequently play in terms of administration and not in terms of political solidarity.

Therefore, working for an NGO can directly affect or alter the way some activists express their political views (Roy, 2009). As I showed, the professionalisation of resistance, the dependence on donors’ funding and consequently the donors’ goals, combined with a need for economic survival by former activists or “burn out” by others has affected previous forms of radical opposition against the border regime policies. I thus found that NGOisation is an indirect way through which exceptional policies are enabled on the ground. Even though there is still considerable resistance on Lesbos, NGOisation is one of the factors that has played a crucial role in diminishing and altering this resistance.

While in this section I focused on how and why some of the humanitarian actors on Lesbos enable exceptional border policies, in the next section the focus is on the role of the intervening security actors on Lesbos. I thus describe the ways they enable surveillance and security policies on the ground.

2. The security actors enabling the border regime

As I argued in the previous chapter the invocation of “humanitarianism” or “crisis” is not the only justification being used to enforce exceptional policies. Migration has increasingly

been described by EU policy makers in security terms by categorising border crossers as a security threat (Council of the European Union, 2015, p. 1) and by referring to border areas as spaces where public order needs to be restored (Council of the European Union, 2016). The securitisation of migration (chapter 3) has played an essential role in Lesvos becoming an exceptional space, where the rule of law is systematically violated. Although the intervention of security actors on Lesvos also includes aspects of a humanitarian intervention, their main role is to control the refugee flows and supervise the implementation of border policies. As Hess and Kasparek (2017b) note, even though the 2015 intervention first pledged support to Greece, it was clearly designed to address the refugee crisis, by means of close supervision of the procedures by EU agencies. Also, as Franck (2018, p. 200) observes, these intervening actors constitute an institutional feature of the way contemporary border regimes are governed and sustained. Moreover, as I explained in the introduction of this chapter, due to the fact that the nature of security actors' work is based on enforcing policies I will not focus on why they enable these policies but I will rather describe how they enable these policies on the ground.

The European Border and Coast Guard Agency, also known as Frontex, is the EU's border management agency performing surveillance at the EU borders. Its operational area in Greece covers Greece's north land borders as well as the sea borders with Turkey and the Greek islands. Frontex had a presence in Greece before the refugee crisis, but after 2015 it has strengthened its operations by bringing additional working staff, vessels and aircraft to assist the Greek coastguard in patrolling the region. In addition, through its search and rescue operations, Frontex is also intervening as a humanitarian agency. According to Frontex (2016) its intervention in Greece involves almost 600 officers, whose main task is to perform border surveillance, combat cross-border crime and assist in the identification and registration of incoming migrants. To that end, twenty-three EU and Schengen associated countries are taking part with land, sea and air forces, technical equipment and officials.

Frontex shares information with the Greek authorities and Europol, which has also intervened on Lesvos. On 22 February 2016 Europol launched the new European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC), in order to "assist national authorities in the field of identification, asylum support, intelligence sharing, criminal investigations and the prosecution of criminal networks of people smugglers" (Europol, 2016). Furthermore, the European Border Surveillance system (EUROSUR), is a project the EU launched in December 2013 to enhance and better integrate border surveillance capabilities at EU

external frontiers (Walters, 2017). It is “a multipurpose system for cooperation between the EU Member states and Frontex in order to improve situational awareness and increase reaction capability at external borders” (European Commission, 2019a). As Tazzioli & Walters (2016, p. 450) point out, EUROSUR is all about interoperability, combination, sorting and synthesising heterogeneous sources and types of data from a multiplicity of sources. During my fieldwork the presence of Frontex and Europol was profound. Some of their members attended the UNHCR Interagency Forum⁴⁵ and one could also observe numerous Frontex vessels at the port of Mytilene and the North coast of Lesbos, while some of them were patrolling the sea even during the day.

The normalisation of security actors’ settlement on Lesbos also becomes evident through the intervention of NATO and its cooperation with Frontex, in order to fight against the operation of human trafficking networks. In February 2016, on the request of Germany, Greece and Turkey, NATO took over the guarding of the territorial waters of Greece and Turkey, as well as international waters, by conducting reconnaissance, monitoring and surveillance (NATO, 2016). Apart from Frontex and NATO the normalisation of surveillance and security actors’ settlement on Lesbos becomes evident through the increased presence and patrolling of the Greek police, military police and coastguard not only in refugee camps but also at Mytilene and various Lesbos’ villages. Stop, search and arrest operations are an everyday phenomenon at the market, streets and squares of Mytilene, which I also witnessed myself during my fieldwork. Also, private security companies, like G4S, have been contracted to run the security in refugee camps.⁴⁶ As Garelli and Tazzioli (2016) phrase it, the operation of all these agencies has resulted in the militarisation of the Aegean Sea border, a process that respectively leads to an increased militarisation of contemporary life (Diken and Laustsen, 2005, p. 92).

Furthermore, the militarisation of Lesbos is not only represented through the physical presence of security actors, but also through remote control techniques. *Investigate Europe*

⁴⁵ As I noticed, the presence of Europol and Frontex (and the Greek police) in these meetings was perceived to be normal and even desirable by the participants, including activists. However, before the refugee crisis the presence of a law enforcement body at local assemblies and meetings among *solidarians* was unwanted. I can recall, for example, a meeting among activists in 2012 when I proposed to invite representatives from Mytilene’s police department, in order to express our concerns on refugees’ prolonged detention at various police departments on Lesbos. They replied to me by asking: “are you crazy?”. The above example shows how the intervention and settlement of security actors on Lesbos has become normalised to such an extent that even radical activists do not oppose – as they used to – to the presence and intervention of these actors.

⁴⁶ G4S is the world’s largest private security company and key actors in the refugee industry worldwide. They have a key role in migrant detention and even asylum seeker accommodation in various countries (see: Corporate Watch, 2012; Grayson, 2016)

(2016), a network of journalists from eight European countries, refer to the paradigm of “remote control” and smart external border through technology, digitalisation and biometrisation:

Military-style command centres, databases of millions of people, massive surveillance through remote-controlled drones, billion-Euro research and national procurement programmes. Far from the public eye, the governments of the European Union are pursuing a weighty long-term plan to use technology on a massive scale for the control of the European borders [...]. The European Commission and the national governments want to abolish fundamental privacy laws and store citizens’ personal data on a massive scale without judicial control.

A main aim of such techniques is to control refugee flows and smuggling networks. As *Investigate Europe* (2016) reported, the European Commission has directed its policy almost exclusively towards the interests of the security and arms industry, and allows their representatives to influence decisions and law-making processes, aiming at the immobilisation of migrant populations within the Greek territory and turning islands like Lesbos into open air prisons. A further aim of these techniques – although not explicitly acknowledged by those enforcing them – is to control radical voices which are against the border regime policies. A characteristic method of achieving this aim is by storing activists’ and volunteers’ personal data. In January 2016, according to a Joint Decision of the Minister of Interior Policy and Administrative Reconstruction and the Minister of Marine and Island Policy (Government Gazette 114 / B/28- 1-2016), the Greek government tried to put an end to the uncontrolled operation of NGOs, by establishing a “National Register of Greek and Foreign Non-Governmental Organizations” (Ministry for Migration Policy, no date). However, this policy not only targeted NGOs and their members but also activists and volunteers. The aim was to register, coordinate and evaluate NGOs, voluntary groups and independent volunteers, who are active on Lesbos (Secretariat General for the Aegean and Island Policy, 2016). In line with this policy, activists and volunteers working on the Greek islands to help refugees are obliged to register with the police in order to carry on their work. Statewatch (2016), a UK non-profit organisation monitoring the state, justice and civil liberties in the EU, commented that:

Demands that NGOs hand over personal details of all their members to the state has no place in a democracy. The exceptional measures being taken in Greece may become the norm across the EU if not challenged now by NGOs and civil society [...] only in the Soviet Union and under the STASI in East Germany were NGOs expected to hand over lists and personal details of all their members/volunteers [...] Now the Greek state at the behest of the EU is seeking to get all volunteers to ‘register’ with the police and hand over lots of personal data including previous ‘activities’ – they are being asked to spy on themselves.⁴⁷

As I noticed during my fieldwork no one on Lesbos, including refugees, activists, volunteers, and even researchers could really escape from the routinised practices of control and panoptical surveillance (Tazzioli and Walters, 2016, p. 446) being enforced beyond the camp, an issue that I further refer to in the next chapter. As a result, in the name of “security threat” (Council of the European Union, 2015, p. 1) and “public order” (Council of the European Union, 2016), Lesbos has indefinitely become a space of control and surveillance performed both by the intervening actors and the Greek authorities.

However, as I also observed, the panoptical surveillance on Lesbos is also taking place with the involvement of both local authorities and part of the local population. As I have shown both local authorities and the local community of Lesbos initially stood in the frontline of the refugee crisis by carrying the burden of managing the refugees in terms of reception and solidarity. As the refugee crisis turned into a permanent, routinised condition, and as border crossers are trapped on Lesbos in an enduring limbo (chapter 3), local authorities’ and local populations’ position towards them dramatically changed. Due to the escalation of xenophobia and racism (chapter 2) a great number of local people demanded more policing and control in order to deal with issues of petty crime perpetrated by some refugees. Locals have often taken the law in their hands by verbally and physically attacking border crossers, NGO workers and *solidarians* on Lesbos (Avraam, 2017; StoNisi.gr, 2020), a situation which led many NGOs to remove their staff from the island, with the situation escalating (Gash, 2020) while writing this chapter. The examples of racism and xenophobia that I

⁴⁷ As I show in the next chapter there is a tension between being registered and surveilled and being registered and accountable. Although the registration of NGOs is perceived as an unwelcome surveillance mechanism by activists and NGOs, there are counterclaims. For the Greek state, the registration of NGOs on Lesbos is a way to take control of its territory; for a part of Lesbos’ local populations the “uncontrolled operation of NGOs” is a neo-colonial practice.

mentioned in chapter 2, can also be seen as a paradoxical way of enforcement, social control, panoptical surveillance and policing of border crossers exercised by the local population and local authorities. During my fieldwork many locals that I spoke with were demanding more policing and control, due to the alleged “delinquent” behaviour by refugees. Initially this was a surprising finding, because I considered that there was already too much policing and surveillance on Lesbos. However, in line with what I mentioned above, the exceptional border regime policies promote the cultivation of surveillance, which in the eyes of many locals has become normal. It was not surprising that “New Democracy”, the conservative political party that won the July 2019 national elections, founded part of its campaign on more surveillance on the Greek islands. The turn of a big part of local populations towards surveillance techniques is an indication that locals’ values concerning the reception of refugees have altered (see next chapter). In February 2020, for example, hundreds of locals took the law into their hands by trying to stop refugees from disembarking at the coasts of Lesbos (StoNisi.gr, 2020). This is one of the consequences that the exceptional border regime policies have brought, which have turned Lesbos into an open prison with all the negative consequences that this has for both refugees and locals (chapter 2). As Mitsos, a local activist noted;

it has now become normal to coexist with armed police, NATO and Frontex and for some of us to also become a part of this. If someone was telling me ten years ago that this would happen, I would have thought that s/he is insane.

The main aim of this section was to show how the exceptional EU security policies are materialised on Lesbos through the intervention of various security actors. The enhanced surveillance and security techniques enforced on Lesbos will be further discussed in the next chapter as form of colonialism.

Conclusion

Based on my argument in chapter 3 that the border regime consists of two non-discrete elements, namely the enforcement of illegitimate exceptional policies by the EU and the intervention of humanitarian and security actors, the focus of this chapter was on the second element of the border regime. I particularly focused on why and how some of these intervening actors enable and materialise border regime policies on the ground, which have become enduring and permanent.

During the first year of the refugee crisis, when hundreds of thousands of refugees arrived on Lesbos, the humanitarian intervention on the island helped to avoid human catastrophes and also provided important assistance for local authorities and activists who were, until then, dealing with refugee arrivals on their own. However, after the beginning of 2016 and the implementation of EU policies violating the rule of law, the role of the intervening actors became problematic since some of these actors have practically enabled these enduring and exceptional policies, which have negatively affected the lives of both refugees and locals.

The operation of the intervening humanitarian actors is frequently demonised and criminalised by local and state actors or EU agencies. However, there is also credible evidence suggesting that these actors have enabled exceptional policies on the ground in the past five years of the refugee crisis. Taking into consideration that the work of many of these actors is funded by the EU, I critically explored the extent to which this leads to a dependent relationship. I showed that the humanitarian actors' dependence on funding can make them align with certain political functions, interests and agendas of their donors. This process frequently results in silencing injustices that the EU border policies produce and gives space for exceptional political agendas to be embedded locally. By referring to critical development literature I also showed in what ways humanitarian actors on Lesbos contribute to making the EU exceptional measures and policies enduring and permanent. I argued that humanitarian actors' provision of necessities, accommodation and cash assistance to refugees enables and prolongs an exceptional situation on Lesbos with devastating consequences for the lives not only of refugees but also local populations. In that respect humanitarian actors become part of the problem and can actually "do harm" (Anderson, 1999) to both refugees and locals. In relation to the humanitarian actors on Lesbos I also showed how the NGOisation of resistance can demobilise local grassroots movements to a certain extent and thus diminish locals' resistance to the border regime's exceptional policies.

In section two I focused on the intervention of security actors. Since their work is by nature focussed on enforcing the law, I did not focus on why they enable these policies, but rather, on how they enable surveillance policies on the ground. In order for these actors to deal with what the EU has framed as a "security threat" (Council of the European Union, 2015, p. 1) and to facilitate a "restoration of public order" (Council of the European Union, 2016), they turned Lesbos into a securitised and militarised zone, where refugees, volunteers and

activists cannot escape panoptical surveillance. As a result, the securitisation and militarisation of Lesbos has been normalised even in the eyes of a part of the local population, who demand even more control and surveillance and, in many cases, themselves act as surveillance actors. This new reality is also related to the escalation of racism and xenophobia that I described in chapter 2 and also disrupts previous forms of social cohesion.

In chapter 3 I explored the state of exception by mainly focusing on the policy-making level, while in this chapter I explored how the border regime policies are enacted and enabled on the ground. In the next chapter I explore the extent to which the above situation generates a form of colonialism in Greece and Lesbos and how colonialism is constructed through these various kinds of intervention.

Chapter 5: Colonialism in Greece and Lesvos?

Introduction

In the previous chapter I focused on why and how key intervening actors on Lesvos enable exceptional policies on the ground. In this chapter, in the context of Greece experiencing a “crisis within a crisis” (chapter 2), I explore to what extent the enforcement of exceptional policies (chapter 3) and the intervention of humanitarian and security actors (chapter 4) generates a form of colonialism both in Greece and Lesvos. My main argument in this chapter is that there are various ways in which colonialism expresses itself in Greece and Lesvos. Historically, since its declaration of independence in 1821, Greece has been dependent on the intervention of more prosperous countries, a situation that the social anthropologist Michael Herzfeld (2002) termed “crypto-colonialism”. Herzfeld argued that although Greece appears to be independent of any colonial powers, that independence is historically expressed in cultural terms, that are dictated largely by dominant states (section 2.1).

What I found useful in Herzfeld’s concept is the fact that he brought into focus Greece’s embeddedness in colonial relations without a formal ruling Empire long before the Greek crises. This enabled me to begin to analyse the current situation in Greece and on Lesvos through the lens of colonialism. Yet while Herzfeld’s concept served as an initial inspiration for this chapter, my empirical findings indicate that what Herzfeld termed “crypto-colonialism”, which draws attention to the covert dimension of colonialism, has escalated over the past ten years, and has become increasingly overt. Hence, the forms of colonialism in contemporary Greece and Lesvos need to be re-examined in the light of the most recent Greek crises and states of exception. As I found, there is also a need to deepen and enrich the concept of crypto-colonialism by connecting it more closely with, and embedding it into, broader post-colonial literature. This literature helps us augment Herzfeld’s historic and cultural focus and offers a more nuanced understanding of the various post-colonial features of contemporary Greek reality including political, economic and discursive components.

In section 1, I discuss the connection between the concept of the “state of exception” – as discussed in chapter 3 – and the colonial space and show how this plays out in relation to the state of exception in contemporary Greece. In section 2, I explain why it is productive to employ both a *crypto* and a post-colonial approach to understand the contemporary situation in Greece, despite the fact that Greece is not an ‘obvious’ former colony or coloniser. In

sections 3 and 4 I separately explore how colonialism is constructed in relation to the Greek state and then in relation to Lesvos. The logic of discussing Lesvos separately from the Greek state is because the interests and concerns of the vast majority of local populations on Lesvos are not always the same as those of the Greek state. I am thus using the perspective of local populations to shed more light on the impact of certain national and international interventions.

Consequently, in section 3 I focus on the Greek state as a part of the “EU-South” and explore in what ways the point of view of the Greek state was overlooked by the EU-policy makers. As I explain, the enforcement of exceptional policies by the EU was founded on a disregard for democratic procedures and also entailed some coercion. However, as I argue, the Greek state capitulated at some point and this led to an abandonment of local populations on Lesvos both by the EU and the Greek state. Therefore, in section 4 I explore how post-colonialism is constructed locally through various kinds of intervention. I particularly focus on how the various partnerships and interactions between local and intervening actors facilitated the transformation of Lesvos into a post-colonial space.

1. The “state of exception” and its relation to colonialism

The first issue to explore is how the “state of exception” that I described in chapter 3 relates to colonialism. Focusing on different geographical contexts various scholars have interlinked these two notions. Achille Mbembe (2001, p. 29) argues that, “commandement (rationality of colonial rule) was based on a *regime d'exception* – that is, a regime that departed from the common law”, and also that, “the colonies are the location par excellence where the controls and guarantees of judicial order can be suspended – the zone where the violence of the state of exception is deemed to operate in the service of “civilization”” (Mbembe, 2003, p. 24; cf. de Sousa Santos, 2007, pp. 4–5). Subhabrata Bannerjee (2006), exploring how contemporary capitalist practices contribute to a subjugation of life remarks that, in the colonies (either “post” or “neo”), entire regions in the Middle East or Africa may be designated as states of exception. Randall Williams (2003, p. 325), focusing on the birth of modern policing in colonial capitalism, argues that we need to think the question of modern policing as a critical strategic manoeuvre in the transformation of national techniques of governance into an international network of centralised state powers; and for this passage to the modern, he argues, the power to rule over the (colonial) exception and the capacity to deploy police force can serve as guiding principles. Derek Gregory (2004, p. 136) explores the history of British and American imperial involvements in the Middle East

and argues that, “the splinters of Palestine have thus been formed into a scattered, shattered space of the exception”, and “the degradation of Iraq's towns and cities – the reduction of its civil society – was not an eternal ‘state of nature’ at all: it was produced as the space of the exception” (Ibid. p. 220).

Each of the above authors describes a state of exception and its relation to colonialism in a different region and with different characteristics. Greece, while experiencing a “state of exception” for the past 10 years, has never been formally colonised and has rarely been part of any discussion of colonialism and post-colonialism (Herzfeld, 2002). I would argue, however, that although Greece is recognised as independent, that independence comes at the price of a form of dependence, which can be traced long before the Greek crises. As I found during my fieldwork this dependence has escalated in the past ten years; in the next section I explain how and why I am using the notion of colonialism. I first refer to the term crypto-colonialism (Herzfeld, 2002) to describe how colonialism manifests in Greece in historical and cultural terms. Next, I expand Herzfeld’s concept in terms of the contemporary context in Greece and the overlapping crises.

2. From crypto-colonialism to post-colonialism

In historic and cultural terms, there is existing academic literature which suggests that Europe has been for Greece both a “model” and an “observer” (Stavrakakis, 2017, p. 99) since the formation of the modern Greek state. As Yannis Stavrakakis (Ibid.) argues:

We know from historical research that, being under constant observation, feeling at all times the ambivalent European gaze, both fascinated by ancient Greece and disappointed by modern Greece, increasingly shaped a type of identity oriented towards the continuous need to prove to Europe the worth of modern Greek achievement. What was continuously judged here was the required ‘progress’ of the new state following its ‘entry exams’ (the war of independence) and its generous acceptance into the ‘civilized’ European world, the EEC, the EU and, finally, the euro-zone.

Stavrakakis explains (Ibid. p. 100) that modern Greece emerges as the dependent variable, the one demanding recognition, support and even affection from the “European Other”. This long-term dependent relationship between Greece and Europe was studied by Herzfeld who

introduced the term “crypto-colonialism” to describe it. For Herzfeld, the prefix “crypto” means a disguised form of colonialism (Taylor-Seymour, 2013). He coined the term in 2002 – long before the financial and refugee crises – to describe the “political marginality that has marked Greece’s relations with prosperous countries throughout most of its history as a nominally independent though practically tributary nation-state” (Herzfeld, 2002, p. 900). For Herzfeld (2002, p. 903) the “curious paradox” in the case of Greece relates to its position as the collective spiritual ancestor of Europe and at the same time, a political pariah in today’s “fast-capitalist” Europe. He thus described the paradoxical condition of a national independence that was contingent on the approval and support of colonial powers (Herzfeld, 2011, p. 25). Herzfeld (2002, p. 900), referring to countries without recent colonial past, such as Greece and Thailand, defines crypto-colonialism as:

The curious alchemy whereby certain countries, buffer zones between the colonized lands and those as yet untamed, were compelled to acquire their political independence at the expense of massive economic dependence, this relationship being articulated in the iconic guise of aggressively national culture fashioned to suit foreign models. Such countries are nominally independent, but that independence comes at the price of a sometimes humiliating form of effective dependence.

As I found during my fieldwork, apart from the above described historical and cultural arguments around otherness, positioning and Europeanness, there are also various contemporary arguments which need to be considered. After 2010 the EU’s stance towards Greece became even more interventionist and as Robbie Shilliam (2015) characteristically observed in 2015, “Europe claimed Greece as its ancestor. But not anymore”. In particular, the exceptional policies and interventions enforced during the Greek crises altered and escalated the already crypto-colonial relationship between Greece and the EU. I thus found that Herzfeld’s concept is missing the depth that post-colonial perspectives can offer and that there is a need to expand the concept, by explaining how it currently operates in practice, in a way which is frequently open and blatant rather than disguised (“crypto”). To that end, I draw on post-colonial theory, which has a more nuanced understanding of various colonial features in contemporary Greece and I argue that what Herzfeld described as crypto-colonialism developed into a form of colonialism encompassing political, economic as well as discursive hegemony (Ferguson, 1990; Crush, 1995). In particular, in the next subsections

I refer to post-colonial literature on orientalism (Said, 2003), Balkanism (Todorova, 1997), Europeanisation (Triandafyllidou, Gropas and Kouki, 2013), ethnocentrism (Mudimbe, 1988) and trusteeship (Cowen and Shenton, 1991), which are all useful in describing the contemporary situation in Greece and Lesbos.

2.1 Moving beyond crypto-colonialism

As Sara Ahmed (2000, p. 11) argues, post-colonialism is about the complexity of the relationship between the past and the present, between the histories of European colonisation and contemporary forms of globalisation. A key argument of post-colonialism is that “practices and consequences” of colonial and imperial traces have lingered into the present and impact upon power relations (Moore-Gilbert, 2000). Hence, the aim of post-colonial scholars is to reveal such practices and consequences, change unequal relations and emancipate subordinated groups (Bailey, 2011, p. 39). It is important to clarify that post-colonial critique does not only apply to relations between colonisers and former colonies (Frankenberg and Mani, 1993) and that the inconclusive status of the “post” in post-colonialism should not be read as a simple “after” or “beyond” (de Jong, 2017, p. 189). It has been suggested that it is more helpful to think of post-colonialism not just as coming literally after colonialism and signifying its demise, but more flexibly as the contestation of colonial domination and the legacies of colonialism (Loomba, 2005, p. 16). According to Moore-Gilbert (1997, p. 11) post-colonial critique can have a wider application and post-colonial theory can be applied to different contexts.

At this point, it is important to highlight that during colonial times race played a crucial role as an ideology in underpinning colonialism and differences between nations were explained with reference to race (Mahmud, 1999). However, the case of Greece – and many other contemporary cases – is different. As Kothari (2006) argues, nowadays “culture” is often a substitute for “race”. She explains that, while biological characteristics and distinctions provided early explanations for social inequalities between people, these later gave way to those in which differences in “culture” were substituted as the main reason why some people had more power and were more “developed” than others (Ibid. p 11). De Jong (2017, p. 178) notes that after the Second World War, it has not only become more common but also more “appropriate” to refer to culture instead of “race” when discussing perceived differences. Crewe & Harrison (1998 in de Jong, 2017, p. 178-179) point out that when “race” is replaced by “culture”, there is a particular understanding of culture at stake. Rather than understanding every practice to be embedded in “culture” and treating culture as

changing and heterogeneous, practices are ascribed to “a culture”, for instance, Greek culture. As I explained in the previous sections even though Herzfeld explored in historic terms how “the Greek national culture [was] fashioned to suit foreign models”, the most recent crises and states of exception in Greece suggest that this situation has escalated in ways that are no longer so “disguised”, in Herzfeld’s terms, and which thus needs to be further empirically explored (sections 3 and 4).

The aforementioned debates on culture also relate to the concept of orientalism which was coined by Edward Said (2003). Said regarded orientalism as one of the most important mechanisms of colonial and imperial domination (Young, 2003, p. 3). He argued that orientalism is a discourse based on binary representations between Western (Occidental) superiority and Eastern (Oriental) inferiority, which was created by Western colonial and imperial powers in order to justify domination of the Orient. The application of orientalism revealed the existence of “a consistent discursive register of particular perceptions, vocabularies and modes of representation common to a wide variety of texts” (Young, 2001, p. 387; Jackson and Sørensen, 2013, p. 239). Orientalism is thus a post-colonial perspective examining how colonial discourses produced a “context that was decisive in paving the way for actual colonisation” and for producing unequal power relations (Jackson and Sørensen, 2013, p. 240). In particular, Said defined orientalism as:

a library or archive of information [...] What bound the archive together is a family of ideas and a unifying set of values proven in various ways to be effective. These ideas explained the behaviour of the Orientals; they supplied the Orientals with a mentality, a genealogy, an atmosphere; most important, they allowed the Europeans to deal with and even to see Orientals as a phenomenon possessing regular characteristics (Said, 2003, pp. 41–42).

According to Said these registers created imaginative truths about the inferiority of the subjects they described, in order to control them, but also to legitimise the Western superiority (McLeod, 2010, p. 19). What is also important about the notion of orientalism and useful for understanding discourses about Greece and “southern Europe” is that it establishes an ontological distinction between the east and west, which posits that things in the west are ‘the same’ and entirely different from ‘east’ (Mitchell, 1991). Moreover, as I pointed out, Greece is also an ambivalent example since it is seen to be part and alluring to

the west (ancient Greece) but also not part of the west and disappointed by it (modern Greece). Nevertheless, while it is fruitful to engage with orientalism, the perspective alone does not adequately and fully explain post-colonial experiences in the EU (Filipescu, 2015, p. 44).

To help understand post-colonial experiences in the EU, it is useful to turn to Maria Todorova's (1997, p. 188) concept of "Balkanism", through which she explored how Western Enlightenment thinkers shaped the image of the Balkans as "a repository of negative characteristics against which a positive and self-congratulatory image of the "European" and the "West"" was produced (see also: Bakić-Hayden, 1995, p. 917). Yet Todorova also underlined how scholars of Orientalism essentialise the West as a homogeneous system. Todorova described Balkanism not as a form of Orientalism but as an independent construction concerning the representation of the Balkans (Jusdanis, 1998). Todorova (1997, p. 14) showed how Western Europe produced discourses about its superiority, while evaluating the Balkan region as backward. In a similar way, Tamara Vukov (2013, p. 164) refers to the large-scale humanitarian intervention during the Yugoslav war and notes that Balkanism is understood as a persistent and recalcitrant imperialist discourse that frames the Balkan region as volatile, primitive, and savage land of primordial hatreds and nationalist backwardness requiring some form of imperial oversight. Through the lens of what Vukov calls "the new Balkanism", neoliberalism is euphemised into a triumphalist discourse of "transition", of the coming of humanitarian aid, democracy and progress to the region; a way to cleanse and purify the region of its indigenous backwardness by westernising it and promising to bring it into the European family (Ibid. p. 165).

The above debates on orientalism and Balkanism also relate to what Valentine Mudimbe (1988) referred to as "ethnocentrism", meaning the judging of another culture solely by the values and standards of one's own culture. He distinguished two kinds of "ethnocentrism", which are often complementary and inseparable: Firstly, an epistemological one, which is the belief that scientifically there is nothing to be learned from "them" unless it is already "ours" or comes from us (Ibid. p.28). Secondly, a "cultural ethnocentrism", connected to intellectual and behavioural attitudes. The ideal way of thinking and behaving, Mudimbe argued, is as viewed from the lenses of Western consciousness, and cultural and social principles (Ibid. p.32).

Greece, as a Balkan country, shares with other Balkan countries many of the above-mentioned stereotypes and alleged characteristics. Greek ‘culture’ is often seen as deficient in terms of enabling a ‘rational’ (self)governance. Specifically, in the past 10 years four southern EU countries, including Greece, implemented economic adjustment programmes, which brought serious economic and socio-political consequences for their people. During this period Greeks have often been characterised as “lazy, not doing enough, unproductive or retiring very early” (Coleman, 2015). Characteristically, Jeroen Dijsselbloem, the Dutch former head of Eurogroup had stated that southern Europeans spent their money on “drinks and women” (Tadeo and Ruhe, 2017), a statement reminiscent of the derogatory acronym “PIIGS”, used to label Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain in the beginning of the financial crisis in 2010. The acronym “PIIGS” was not just a derogatory term being used for these countries’ populations and cultures, but also represented a division of the EU between Southern weak states – and a part of the “Global South” – and Northern prosperous ones – a part of the “Global North”. In sections 3 and 4 I further explore how the notions of “orientalism”, “Balkanism” and “ethnocentrism” apply in the cases of Greece and Lesbos.

At this point I should clarify that the terms “Global South” and “Global North” that I am using in this chapter have widely been used in the past decades in post-colonial literature. Aravamudan (2012) observes that:

The initial origin of the term lay in Willy Brandt’s ‘North-South’ report that attempted to transpose the major developing divide in the world of the 1970s away from the standoff represented by the Cold War that was seen as an ‘East-West’ divide. Sometimes ‘south’ merely and supposedly politely substitutes for what we used to call the third world.

Within my thesis I am not using the terms “South” and “North” to simply refer to a geographical location; Ireland, for example, is part of the so-called PIIGS but is not a southern European country. Ireland is also a post-colonial nation and Irish people were previously considered racially different. Instead, I am using the term “South” symbolically, in order to refer to economically and politically weak/marginalised states and the term “North” to refer to those dominant states that are shaping, through their policies and interventions, the politics of the states of the “South”. There are various examples indicating that countries which geographically belong to the North are referred to as a part of the Global

South and vice versa. For instance, Harcourt (2009, p. 29) notes that, “Australia while geographically South becomes in this terminology part of the global North while parts of Eastern Europe are part of the South”. Mabin (2013) observes that there is a problem if we understand ‘the South’ as a geographical category, because we are then imposing spatial ideas on a relational category: that of the south as referring to social relations, not to place. Most importantly, the terms North and South refer to a relationship involving both material and discursive power imbalances, indicating how global politics function (Goudge, 2003).

The power imbalances among EU countries have also been explored by various scholars, particularly in light of border management and the refugee issue. In particular, the intervention of European agencies and organisations at the borders of Europe signalled a new mode of Europeanization, which aims at transferring central competences towards Brussels (Triandafyllidou, Gropas and Kouki, 2013), with the European Agenda on Migration limiting this transfer to scenarios of crisis and exception (Hess and Kasparek, 2017b). According to Moumoutzis (2011, p. 612);

Europeanisation is a process of incorporation in the logic of domestic (national and sub-national) discourse, political structures and public policies of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, “ways of doing things” and shared beliefs and norms that are first defined in the EU policy processes.

As a result, in section 3 of this chapter I explore the economic and political governance of the Greek state and how this relates to post-colonialism. I explain how the EU and various intervening actors in Greece frequently determine the “ways of doing things” by overruling and substituting the Greek state (section 3.2) and by enforcing, through coercion, enhanced surveillance and trusteeship exceptional policies in violation of the Greek legislative powers and of the democratic principle (section 3.1). As Michael Cowen and Robert Shenton (1991) explain, international development from its inception involved the crafting of a set of managerial strategies, what they call “trusteeship”, to deal with the disruptions of social disorder within Europe and, later, the colonial and post-colonial worlds. Thus, for Cowen and Shenton “development and trusteeship are a part of each other; without trusteeship there is no development doctrine” (Ibid. p. 54). This trusteeship/ guardianship manifests within every aspect of the contemporary Greek politics, from economy to migration and border management. In section 4, where I focus on Lesbos, I further explore how the partnerships

and interactions between various intervening actors – who have intervened as ‘experts’ – and local populations undermine the point of view and concerns of locals. These partnerships, although implying a relation between equals and a break with colonial relations, mask a continuing reality of unequal power relationships (Baaz, 2005; de Jong, 2017) among actors who come to the table with different varieties and levels of power.

Before starting with my analysis in sections 3 and 4 on how forms of colonialism materialise in the Greek state and Lesbos, it is important to first explain that the reality in Greece is complex. I clarify that it is not as simple as positioning the EU and the intervening actors against Greece and Lesbos’ populations. Like I did when exploring the “state of exception” (chapter 3), I also explore the notion of post-colonialism in Greece and Lesbos not as perpetrated by a single actor – like the EU and its intervening actors – with a single objective, but as cultivated in much more disparate ways by various actors that have a variety of different objectives.

2.2 The Greek state, its ‘internal elites’ and local populations

Ania Loomba (2005, p. 16) points out that, “colonialism is not just some thing that happens from outside a country or a people, not just some thing that operates with the collusion of forces inside, but a version of it can be duplicated from within”. As I argue, the Greek state – including various internal neoliberal elites – and the majority of Greek populations are not always a unified entity with a unified position and their interests and concerns are not necessarily always aligned. As I showed in chapter 3, discourses by governmental officials and the Greek mainstream media associated with the politics of fear played an essential role in exceptional policies being enforced. During the financial crisis, a main narrative of the Greek government and mainstream media was that if the Greek state does not enforce further austerity measures the country will be expelled from the eurozone with catastrophic consequences. Consequently, the Greek state together with what Stavrakakis (2017, p. 100) calls “modernising elites” cultivated among the Greek people a deep fear of losing the European gaze, a fear of “becoming too closely identified with some vague category of barbarians” (Herzfeld, 2002, p. 902), of losing their own sense of subjectivity as (potential) Europeans, a situation that would have catastrophic economic and social consequences for the Greek people.

Even more importantly, apart from the aforementioned mostly symbolic stance by the Greek state of losing the “European gaze”, Greece’s neoliberal elites also played a pivotal role in

adopting exceptional policies. These elites were the Troika's allies in Greece, running the banks, the mainstream media controlling public opinion as well as private actors economically benefiting from the Greek crisis. However, the bailout plans that saved the banks allowed Greece to remain in a "black hole" during the years of the financial crisis, according to Greece's former finance minister and scholar Yanis Varoufakis (2018). The Troika, with the acquiescence of the Greek governments, chose to rescue the banks and protect the elites benefiting from the privatisation of valuable public assets (Douzinas and Papaconstantinou, 2011). As I showed in chapter 3, instead of "rescuing", these "rescue" packages initiated an "oligarchic regime" (Kioupkiolis, 2014, p. 143) and a "state of exception", which dramatically changed the everyday lives of Greek people on the one hand, but on the other hand, benefited international and internal elites. This situation has many similarities with structural adjustment programs in Africa, which facilitated and imposed a neoliberal reform agenda on post-colonial African states (Franz and Obare, 2011, chapter 3). In a similar way, as I showed in chapter 4, during the refugee crisis the economic interests and funding dependence of not only international but also internal actors allowed various exceptional policies to be enabled and to become enduring and permanent. In section 3.3 I further discuss how the Greek state, despite its initial objections to the enforcement of various exceptional policies, capitulated in many cases during the Greek crises by overlooking the voices of Greek populations.

By taking into consideration the above debates, in the next section I discuss the notion of colonialism in relation to the Greek state. I explore how the Greek state opposed various EU exceptional policies but also how it finally acquiesced to many of these policies. This alignment frequently contradicts with the Lesvos population's voices and concerns, an issue I explore in section 4.

3. Post-colonialism and the Greek State

In this section I explore how post-colonial features materialise in relation to the Greek state. In the first subsection I focus on the ways the Greek state's interests and point of view were overlooked by EU policy makers during the Greek crises. I explore why this took place, what the effects were, how is this related to post-colonialism, international pressure and influence versus the interests of the Greek state. In section 3.2 I explore how the Greek state and administration was substituted or overruled by various intervening actors on Lesvos. Finally, in section 3.3 I explain how the Greek state was aligned in many cases with various EU

exceptional policies, overlooking in this way the interests and concerns of Lesbos' local populations.

3.1 Democratic legitimacy and coercion

In chapter 3 I explained how border regime policies have established a state of exception in Greece, which turned the country into a buffer zone where diverse actors undertook the management of the thousands of stranded refugees. However, as I argued, the negotiations in relation to the enforcement of these policies took place behind “closed doors” and thus challenge the notion of democratic accountability and violate the rule of law in terms of legitimisation. As I showed these exceptional policies are devoid of democratic legitimacy, public contest and debate and are strong indicators of Greece being treated like a “weak state” by its dominant partners. For example, the EU-Turkey Statement was adopted in violation of the Greek Parliament's powers and of the democratic principle (Gatti, 2016a, p. 1). In a similar way, the closure of the Balkan route and the imposition of a geographical restriction on refugees' movements on the Greek islands were policies being decided behind “closed doors”, disregarding the point of view of national parliaments.

As I showed in chapter 3, in the case of the refugee crisis the enforcement of exceptional border policies entailed a breach of the rules and procedures safeguarding the operation of the EU. Tasia, a former advisor of the Greek Minister of Migration, argued during our interview that in her opinion, “the notion of exception does not have to do that much with the violation of refugee law, but mostly with diminishing the notion of democracy and the rule of law, an alarming issue not only for Greece, but also of Europe”. As Kioupkiolis (2014, pp. 146–147) observes, such modes of rule violate standard operating procedures of liberal democracy and eliminate residues of democratic substance, evincing almost no concern for popular consent and democratic legitimation. In that way, he explains, governance is being entrusted to unelected technocrats who turn government into “expert administration” and do not uphold the autonomy of political decision-making. Thus, political authority becomes subordinate to international centres of power and economic force, on externally imposed managerial strategies and trusteeship (Cowen and Shenton, 1991).

In order for exceptional policies to be enforced during the Greek crises the notion of “coercion” by the EU against the Greek state played an important role. Coercion has been acknowledged to be a key element of various interventions worldwide (Caney, 2005, p. 228). In the case of Greece, coercion is related to power imbalances among the EU and the Greek

state and threats suggesting that any other alternative than the one proposed by the Troika (in the case of the financial crisis) or the EU (in the case of the refugee crisis), would be catastrophic for the Greek people. One characteristic example is the 2015 Greek referendum to decide whether Greece should accept the bailout conditions proposed by the Troika. During that period the threats made by the Troika against Greece were intense: Greece would be expelled from the EU with catastrophic consequences for its people, leading to excessive hardship, wealth reduction, the need for even deeper austerity measures, resulting in civil unrest, queues at bank machines, businesses haemorrhaging money etc. (Lowen, 2015). During the referendum campaign in June 2015 the Greek Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras, called Greeks “to say a big ‘no’ to ultimatums, no to blackmail, no those who terrorise you” (Ibid). Acceptance of extremely harsh austerity measures became a precondition for the payment of the instalments of the Greek bailouts, which was “blackmail worthy of a backstreet loan shark” (Douzinas and Papaconstantinou, 2011). As Douzinas and Papaconstantinou (Ibid.) explain the bailout of Greece was not a gift or grant but a loan bearing high interest. These bailout funds were not used to pay civil servants’ salaries and pensions, but to pay off debt held by Greek, German and French banks.

Likewise, regarding the refugee crisis, when several EU countries decided to close the Balkan route, Greek ministers spoke about “unilateral” actions by the EU countries, which attempt to discuss how to address a humanitarian crisis in Greece that they themselves intend to create (The New Arab, 2016). At the same time, the EU threatened to suspend Greece’s inclusion in the Schengen zone “unless it overhauls its response to the migration crisis” (De Genova and Tazzioli, 2016). As Vradis et al. (2019, p. 101) argue:

the border regime policies provide a lens through which to view broader transformations within the Greek polity. This particularly refers to the weakening power of the Greek state in the face of external controls and demands from its lenders, as well as in its international management of its borders. As such, the extent to which humanitarian agencies take on the role of policy elaboration and perform acts of sovereignty within Greek territory has contributed to the country’s consolidation as a border zone within the European border regime.

Savas, a senior administrative public servant, criticised the EU's stance towards the Greek state by arguing that, "the EU is closing its borders and at the same time it is funding its agencies, like Frontex and Europol, in order for Greece to manage the stranded refugees. This shows the absurdity of the situation and the supervisory control by the EU countries over Greece". Martha Finnemore (2003, p. 9) suggests that "intervention is the term used for compromises of sovereignty by other states that are exceptional in some way." Even though every country when it enters the EU automatically loses some of its national sovereignty, the issue with Greece is different. Due to the financial crisis the country has lost part of its economic sovereignty; Greece's "bailout" loans, for example, were issued under English law, which weakened the position of Greece as a borrower (Papadopoulos & Roumpakis, 2018, p. 205). The loss of economic sovereignty is also accompanied by unprecedented attacks on the political and legal integrity of the country. For example, the abolition of the Greek parliament's powers to legislate freely (Varoufakis, 2018a) is an indicative example showing how Greece's political sovereignty is challenged too. In the past ten years IMF and EU inspectors visit the country on a regular basis, examine the records and dictate policy. Foreign emissaries were assigned to the main ministries and run the companies that will privatise the public wealth (Douzinas and Papaconstantinou, 2011). In 2011 the European authorities also demanded that the Greek government's capitulation was not enough and that all Greek political parties should accept the new austerity measures before the next loan instalment was paid (Ibid.).

The situation described above shows how EU policy makers, by dictating policy and establishing a state of exception in Greece, frequently treat the Greek state as a colony. As I previously showed, the rationality of colonial rule is based on a state of exception, on a regime departing from the rule of law (Mbembe, 2001, p. 29). The Greek state's independence is to a large extent contingent on trusteeship, in Cowen and Shenton's terms (1991, p. 54), on the approval, support and supervision of the EU. Framing the "ways of doing things" (Moumoutzis, 2011, p. 612) and incorporating policies through threats and coercion is also an indication of inequality in power relations (Moore-Gilbert, 1997, p. 23). As Douzinas and Papaconstantinou (2011) point out, "surreptitiously, a new type of colonialism is emerging, in which the Brussels elites treat the European south as undeserving poor or colonial subjects to be reformed and civilised". These colonial discourses bring to mind the concepts of Orientalism and Balkanism that I previously discussed.

Apart from the above described relationship between the Greek state and the EU mostly focusing on a policy making level and power imbalances, it is important to explore the relationship between the Greek state and the various intervening actors on Lesvos and how this relationship is related to post-colonialism.

3.2 The intervening actors and the Greek state

As I showed in chapter 3 the already weak position of the ‘failed’ Greek state allowed various actors to intervene and settle on Lesvos and thus to become “practitioners of territoriality and sovereignty” (Ramadan and Fregonese, 2017; Sassen, 2017). As I explained, these actors are not the state but resemble it, collaborate with it, or overpower it (Ramadan and Fregonese, 2017, p. 951). In this subsection I explore the interactions between these intervening actors and the Greek state and how this relationship establishes a form of colonialism in Greece.

In the previous chapter I explained how Frontex and NATO have taken control over the Greek national sea borders while the UNHCR, EASO and various (I)NGOs have substituted the Greek state by taking over the main responsibilities regarding the management of refugees and asylum. However, the fact that many of these actors are mainly accountable to their donors is problematic because it ties their action to the politics of their donor. As I explained in chapter 4 the biggest pots of money for the refugee crisis are controlled by the European Commission (EC). Ioannis Mouzalas, the former Minister of Immigration Policy in Greece, admitted that the Greek state does not have the financial control over the funds being distributed by the EC and that this raises issues of lacking democratic accountability and respect for democracy (Skai Group, 2018). During a TV interview in January 2018 (Ibid.), he pointed out that:

Greece has almost received 1 billion Euro, out of which the Greek state has received 450 million and after negotiations with the EU the total amount reached 530 million [...]. The rest 500 million went to IOs and NGOs; we do not have the financial control of these funds and we cannot investigate how organisations used that money. It would be a sign of respect for democracy, if NGOs were publishing a monthly financial report explaining how they use these funds.

Tasia, a former advisor of the Minister of Migration explained during our interview that the EU funding mechanism is structured in such a way that it does not leave much space for the Greek state to monitor where the money goes and more importantly how it is spent and used. She also said that:

The ECHO funding, which is designed to provide emergency humanitarian assistance for third countries was also triggered in Greece, by distributing millions of Euro to IOs and NGOs. The idea is to directly fund humanitarian actors, without considering the third countries' point of view, because the EU wants to avoid shared management with some third country corrupted governments. However, they followed the same practices in the case of Greece, which is an EU and not a third country.

Mouzas's and Tasia's criticism on the lack of financial control by the Greek state indicates that Greece is treated as a state of the "Global South" and is evaluated by its "superior" European "partners" as backward, in Todorova's terms (1997, p. 14) and unreliable to administer EU funds. Furthermore, the lack of the Greek state's financial control relates to what many locals on Lesbos call "money burning", which describes the way that some of the (I)NGOs are spending their funds. As many of my interviewees highlighted, a crucial question arising is "where's all the money gone?" As Mitsos, a local activist argued, "even though NGOs receive huge amounts of money, the situation is getting worse than getting better. This happens because many NGOs are just doing money burning". The practice of money burning has been described in literature as a system whereby foreign currency is converted into local currency on the black market at rates excessively higher than the official interbank rates. This practice has emerged in countries like Zimbabwe as a manifestation of the economic challenges that many people confronted (Gukurume, 2010, p. 63). However, this phrase was used differently by Lesbos' locals. As Vaso, a local activist, told me:

The EU has a specific method of controlling the funding. It does not have to do with the issue of impact and effectiveness. You are not accountable for what exactly you did and how effective this was. You are just providing invoices. As you know, concerning invoices in Greece you can write whatever you want. And most importantly invoices do not have to do with the substance, meaning in what way

you help and how many people, what have you left behind, or what kind of innovation have you brought.

The way that some NGOs were spending their funds, without any previous communication and arrangements with the Greek authorities, was a source of frustration for many locals, who blamed the Greek state for its inability to control the operation of these NGOs. The examples showing how NGOs frequently take critical initiatives by avoiding any communication with the Greek state (and also local authorities as I show in the next section) and thus unilaterally making decisions are numerous. In early 2016, the establishment of a camp by an INGO on the north coast of Lesbos cost 1,5 million Euro, but state officials were unaware of this development. As Vaso, a local activist told me:

We visited this camp together with the Minister's main counsellor; we were outside of the camp and the counsellor thought that this was Moria camp. The NGO personnel informed the counsellor that this is a new facility and the counsellor replied that 'we were not aware of its establishment'.

The above example is also related to what Lesbos' locals call "the uncontrolled operation of NGOs", due to the failure of the Greek state to map and control these actors, but also due to the refusal of some of these actors to be registered and to be held accountable to the Greek state and local authorities. As I showed in the previous chapter the registration of activists and (I)NGOs was criticised as an unwelcome surveillance mechanism. However, for the Greek state, the registration of NGOs on Lesbos was a way to take control of its territory. Also, some locals from Lesbos considered the "uncontrolled operation of NGOs" a neo-colonial practice (see: section 4). In particular, the exact number of (I)NGOs during the second phase of the refugee crisis, and to some extent also the third one, is difficult to estimate. As I found during my fieldwork the number of (I)NGOs operating on Lesbos was unclear. According to the Ministry of Mercantile Marine and Island Policy, from February 2016 until May 2018, 132 (I)NGOs have been recorded on Lesbos (EmprosNet.gr, 2018). Musaferat (2016, p. 35), a collective against detention centres, numbered around 200 NGOs. The president of Molyvos village, which is on the north coast of Lesbos, told me that after August 2015 he estimates that 103 NGOs were operating in Molyvos alone. Many local activists also mentioned that the number of intervening NGOs during 2015/2016 was probably in the hundreds, but that it was impossible to have a clear picture. As Voula, a local

activist explained, some of them operated only for a few weeks while others were settled on Lesbos and had an active presence to date.⁴⁸

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, in January 2016 the Greek government tried to put an end to the uncontrolled operation of NGOs by issuing a law concerning the establishment of a “National Register of Greek and Foreign Non-Governmental Organizations” (Ministry for Migration Policy, no date). During the interview that I had with the Secretariat General for the Aegean and Island Policy, I was informed that NGOs and their members must register and renew their registration every month, but also that there are many organisations that have avoided the process or refused to proceed with the registration of their members. “It is an obligation for them to come and register but, we often beg them to come”, they told me. As I noticed, the above-mentioned legislation did not bring the desired results. After my fieldwork I concluded that the issue of (I)NGOs’ registration on Lesbos was still relatively chaotic. There were many unregistered NGOs and the Greek state had no clear picture of the exact number of these organisations on Lesbos. The Secretariat General for the Aegean and Island Policy informed me that there were 30 registered NGOs. According to a list that the UNHCR provided during its coordination meetings there were around 60 (I)NGOs operating on Lesbos. Based on my own observations, I would estimate that there were actually many more (I)NGOs operating without being registered. During my non-participant observation, I counted at least 20 more NGOs operating, which were not included in either of the above-mentioned lists. In addition, there were many (I)NGOs that were not settled on the island but were rather visiting the island for a few days, mainly to evaluate the situation, to produce a report or to have meetings with other NGOs on Lesbos. As one of Lesbos’ vice Mayors told me, “many of the intervening NGOs are not registered, and are settling and operating without any previous communication with the Greek state and local authorities”. Some of my interviewees confirmed the vice Mayor’s statement by saying that many NGOs simply think they can enter the Greek state and settle on Lesbos without any previous communication with the Greek authorities. However, these spatial practices of NGOs invoke and reproduce colonial power relations (Smirl, 2015) by disregarding the point of view of the Greek authorities.

Voula also pointed out that the uncontrolled operation of NGOs was causing confusion concerning who is doing what and whose responsibility is the management of the refugee response and the coordination of NGOs. The lack of an actor taking responsibility also

⁴⁸ For a brief account of the NGOs that intervened on Lesbos in 2015 see: (EmprosNet.gr, 2015)

relates to the lack of accountability. As Barnett and Finnemore (2004; in Papadopoulos, 2010, p. 1032) argue, the absence of accountability “means that those in power have the capacity to act without regard for those who authorise their actions and for those whose lives are affected by those actions”.

Apart from the practices of humanitarian actors on Lesbos, equally interesting is the role of EASO and its involvement in the Greek asylum service. Athanasios, a lawyer working for an INGO, claimed that “EASO, in a similar way to Frontex, argues that ‘support is our mission’, but this is not supporting if you have decision making powers”. EASO’s decision making powers gradually increased since its arrival on Lesbos in late 2014. Savas, a senior administrative public servant, explained to me that EASO initially had an advisory role; gradually this started changing and the Greek state practically allowed EASO’s initial advisory role to be expanded into a decision making one. Regarding refugees’ returns to Turkey, for example, EASO officers conduct interviews and recommend a decision to the Greek Asylum Service. EASO’s concluding remarks specify whether the safe third country concept may be applied in the particular case, and thereby provide the ground on which the application can be rejected as inadmissible (chapter 3). Many of the lawyers on Lesbos that I spoke with argued that it is a regular practice of the Greek Asylum Service to exclusively rely on EASO’s record without posing any direct questions to the applicant. “This is the guidance they have from the Greek state”, Thanos, a local lawyer told me. So, the Greek Asylum Service’s decision is bound to heavily rely not only on EASO’s decision-making as to the conduct of the interview itself, but also on EASO’s final recommendation on admissibility. Therefore, EASO officers exercise de facto power on decisions in relation to applications for international protection by conducting admissibility interviews and making recommendations. Despite the fact that the Greek state allowed EASO to have decision making powers, the Greek asylum service working staff found this practice as “highly interventionist”, Savas told me. As Thanos also informed me, during these interviews there is no one from the Greek public administration monitoring the procedure, while lawyers are not allowed to have access on the opinion expressed by EASO.

Savas also explained how EASO gradually took over basic responsibilities from the Greek asylum service: “At some point we noticed that EASO was taking initiatives, in terms of prioritising cases and on the way asylum claims should be examined, without even asking our opinion”. After August 2018 EASO’s role became even more active and interventionist, by bringing additional working staff and being involved with the regular asylum procedure,

by conducting interviews in the examination of asylum applications. As a Greek lawyer claimed, “the need for accountability is even more pressing since EASO is now exclusively responsible for the conducting of all interviews on the island” (ECCHR, 2018). As Thanos told me, some Greek lawyers have started raising objections in Greek courts by claiming that their clients are seeking international protection from the Greek authorities, but their applications are examined by a foreign authority. EASO’s intervention on Lesbos and its supervisory role over the Greek administration shows in what ways EU agencies have oversight and dictate “ways of doing things” (Moumoutzis, 2011, p. 612) and thus producing discourses about their superiority.

EASO’s intervention on Lesbos became even more intense during my fieldwork, when they started hiring personnel from Greece. The Greek asylum service was understaffed but due to Greece’s commitments to the Troika, there were strict limitations on any Greek public service hiring additional permanent staff. EASO came to cover this gap by themselves hiring Greek working staff. As Evelina, an IO worker commented, “in order for EASO to overcome complaints regarding their intervention as an external authority they are hiring Greeks, in order to give the impression that their employees are representing the Greek public administration, but of course this is not the case”. Thekla a local activist added that, “hiring Greek staff is one of the techniques they use in order to establish their presence in Greece”. Co-opting local people into colonial governance structures is an issue that I also discussed in the previous chapter (see also: de Jong and Kimm, 2017, p. 190) by explaining that colonised people can sometimes get co-opted into colonial governance. In the case of Greece and Lesbos the “crisis within the crisis” has produced unemployment and hardship and this leads to an “increasing susceptibility” to co-optation (de Jong and Ataç, 2017, p. 31) by many locals.

Furthermore, Nikos – an INGO representative – spoke about “some of the paradoxes” regarding EASO’s intervention. As he said:

A common issue of discussion among colleagues is that EASO has senior working staff from countries like Poland, Austria and Hungary and the governments of these countries have denied the reception of refugees, by closing their borders. Thus, they are here to control the refugee flows and make sure that refugees will remain trapped in Greece, or they will return to Turkey. They have closed their borders,

but at the same time they intervene in Greece, which practically keeps its borders open, and they have decision making powers on how Greece will manage refugees. They want to monitor and control what is happening here and accordingly shape their policies.

The above quote shows how enhanced surveillance and trusteeship (Cowen and Shenton, 1991, p. 54) practically work on Lesbos. It also shows how partnerships, although implying a relation between equals and a break with colonial relations, mask a continuing reality of unequal power (Baaz, 2005; De Jong, 2017) between actors who come to the table with different interests. Similar enhanced surveillance techniques on Lesbos are also represented through other interventions like the one of Frontex during the identification and registration of newly arrived refugees. As some of my interlocutors mentioned, these procedures are carried out exclusively by Frontex and not by the Greek authorities. As Thanos explained:

Although the Greek reception and identification service should be the competent authority registering the newly arrived refugees, Frontex has practically undertaken this role. As lawyers we have seen too many critical registration mistakes by Frontex, in terms of refugees' correct nationality or age. However, we are not allowed to intervene and the whole process takes place behind 'closed doors'.

An equally interesting example highlighting the enhanced surveillance in Greece is the substitution of the Greek state by NATO. According to Dalakoglou (2016, p. 184), the Greek government submitted the control of the country's borders to NATO in the name of the hypothetical threat coming from refugees. As Angelos Chrysosgelos (2016) observes, NATO's mission in the Aegean also raises major questions for Greek foreign policy, by opening up long-term problems for Greece with regards to Greek interests in the Aegean and Greece's relations with Turkey (also see the conclusion of this thesis). The Greek state's initial position was that any NATO mission must operate in Turkish waters only. However, as Chrysosgelos notes, Greece's retreat from this position, to the point of accepting to co-sponsor the demand for a mission to NATO along with Germany and Turkey, is a testament to the extreme pressures it faces from the EU to reduce migrant flows lest it gets expelled from Schengen. As I argued in chapter 3, these threats were intense in late 2015 and early 2016, when the closure of the "Balkan route" took place.

In this subsection I showed how various guardianship mechanisms are enabled in Greece through the intervention of various actors. As Savas argued, by referring to the various interventions in Greece, “what the EU managed to do was to make us comply with the new border policies, by supervising the Greek state and administration and making sure that the EU-Turkey deal is effectively implemented”. Consequently, administrative and managerial practices that the EU assumes that the Greek state inadequately enforces, must now change through the implementation of new policies and the intervention of various actors, who are taking control of the situation. As Vradis et al. (2019, p. 101) argue, the border regime policies are not only a tool for the regulation of entry of unauthorised individuals, but also a means to reinforce divisions among European countries, creating and reinforcing conditions of economic and technical dependency. Thus, the EU, through its intervening actors has oversight and dictates “ways of doing things” (Moumoutzis, 2011, p. 612). Its agencies frequently substitute and overrule the Greek administration and inevitably produce discourses about their superiority.

Even though I showed in this section that the Greek state opposed to an extent the enforcement of various exceptional policies, in the next subsection I shed more light on my argument developed in section 2.2, that the Greek state – despite its initial objections around the enforcement of various exceptional policies – capitulated in many cases during the Greek crises and ignored the voices of Greek populations. This can help us to better understand how the border regime can emerge from the combined actions of multiple actors operating in a single space to create a seemingly coherent state of exception (chapter 3). It also shows that the Greek state – including various internal neoliberal elites – and the majority of Lesbos’ local populations are not always a unified entity with a unified position and their interests and concerns are not necessarily always aligned with one another.

3.3 The capitulation of the Greek state

As I previously showed, in many cases, the Greek state allowed the EU and the various intervening actors to have a supervisory role during both the financial and refugee crises. Despite the fact that the Greek state initially opposed various exceptional policies (section 3.1), it subsequently aligned, accepted and promoted the enforcement of many of these policies. As I argued, this alignment was, on the one hand, a result of coercion and threats perpetrated by the EU. On the other hand, it was also a result of the Greek state’s and its neoliberal elites’ interests. The alignment was also achieved through the support of the Greek elite owned and driven mainstream media of the EU narrative that any other solution than

the enforcement of various exceptional policies would be catastrophic for Greece. Both the Greek state and those who Stavrakakis (2017) names as the “modernising elites” played as representatives of the European Other while internal neoliberal elites focused on making profit and taking advantage of the Greek crises.

There are various examples showing how the capitulation of the Greek state took place. For instance, regarding the financial crisis, a week after the 2015 referendum the Greek government disregarded the referendum result by accepting one more austerity package (TyrantWatch, 2015). This led to the Greek state’s “capitulation” or even “betrayal” as many called it (Stavrakakis, 2017; Varoufakis, 2018a). During the refugee crisis despite the strong objections by the Greek state in relation to policies such as the closure of the “Balkan route”, the Greek government finally acquiesced to the EU’s exceptional policies. This led to the establishment of buffer zones on islands like Lesbos with devastating consequences for the lives of refugees and local populations (chapter 2).

Regarding Lesbos, as I mentioned in chapter 3, in February 2020 the Greek government announced that it would be going ahead forcibly with plans to build a new closed detention centre on Lesbos, a decision which was aligned with the EU policies focusing on turning whole Greek regions into buffer zones.⁴⁹ However, this alignment of the Greek state with EU border policies was perceived by local populations on Lesbos as a betrayal and a further abandonment by law. Locals perceived this governmental policy as an invasion by their own government and stepped up opposition with demonstrations and general strikes. Konstantinos Moutzouris, the governor of the north Aegean region, said that, “not even the junta did such things,” referring to the military dictatorship which ruled Greece between 1967 and 1974. It was appalling, he said, that riot police should use such force against locals who were at the coal face of the refugee crisis (Smith, 2020). Similarly, in March 2020, when thousands of refugees attempted to cross the Turkish-Greek land and sea borders the Greek government practically accepted its role as the “shield of Europe”. The head of the European Commission announced its support for Greece’s attempts to stop migrants crossing its border from Turkey. “Our first priority”, Ursula von der Leyen said, “is to ensure order is maintained at the Greek external border, which is also a European border”. She also promised Greece, which she called a “European *aspida* [shield]”, €700m in financial support

⁴⁹ A few months later, in August 2020, the European Commission approved the funding for the establishment of closed detention centres on the Greek islands, by acknowledging the emergency need of this funding (Ministry of Migration, 2020, also see next chapter).

to upgrade infrastructures at the border (BBC, 2020a), despite questions from the UN about breaches of international refugee law.

These exceptional policies enforced both by the EU and the Greek state led to a brutal transformation of whole regions into buffer zones, into humanitarian and at the same time militarised zones. As Étienne Balibar (2012, in De Genova and Tazzioli, 2016) notes, “one part of Europe is transforming another part into an internal post-colony” through a process of “zoning” in which “the inequalities of globalization reproduce themselves” in the heart of these countries and regions. Camps on the borders of the EU feature as humanitarian migration management tools in the same way that Michel Agier (2011) identifies refugee camps in the global South as spaces of “colonial government” and as enclaves. During my fieldwork I noticed that Lesvos’ populations frequently felt “abandoned by law” (Agamben, 1998) not only by the EU but frequently even by the Greek state. Lesvos displayed strong colonial features – which were quite overt – and I propose to consider the island as a post-colonial space within the larger post-colonial space of Greece. So, in the next section, I use the perspective of local populations to shed more light on the impact of certain international and national interventions.

4. Lesvos as a post-colony within a post-colony

My general impression during my fieldwork was that local authorities and local populations were feeling as abandoned by the Greek state as by the EU and in many cases they perceived the intervention of humanitarian actors as an intrusion, undermining their concerns and interests. Thus, representatives from villages and the municipality with whom I spoke condemned the stance of both INGOs and the Greek state. Regarding the Greek state, the vast majority of them said that the government is aligned to an extent with the interests of the EU and consequently with the NGOs having intervened. As they said, not one of them ever asked for locals’ point of view regarding the implementation of policies, such as the EU-Turkey deal and the geographical restriction which were directly affecting their everyday lives. The president of Moria village said that:

Every day, every week there are state and European officials coming here, there are NGOs that can influence policy makers, there are celebrities and academics like you visiting Lesvos. Nobody ever came here to speak with us! We are experiencing the refugee issue for so many years and we can make proposals, we have practical

solutions to suggest, but I think the only thing they really want is to dictate policies and for NGOs to establish their presence here.

Lesvos as a space where diverse actors cooperate and interact with each other, is an interesting case to explore, in terms of how power works among actors. Dion Curry (2015) suggests that the hierarchical nature of relationships among actors is decisive in determining the level and space for power to be dispersed, since different actors come to the table with different varieties, agendas and levels of power. Power and its effects on various populations can be conceptualized by the phrase, “in the shadow of hierarchy” (Alcantara and Morden, 2017, p. 4), meaning that even in decision-making situations steeped in co-production practices, governmental and non-governmental actors still come to the table with different varieties and levels of power. As Herman Bakvis (2013) notes, even in governance systems based on extensive collaboration, hierarchy is never absent. Geoffrey Wood (1997), in the context of Bangladesh, highlights problems raised for governance when the state devolves some of its functions to other bodies. He calls this a “franchise” strategy and a central question for him is: to what extent do citizens of the state lose basic political rights if the delivery of universal services and entitlements is entrusted to other bodies? This brings into mind Agamben’s (2005) argument that within a state of exception various populations can be abandoned by law.

Tamara Vukov (2013, p. 163), in the context of post-Yugoslav Serbia, argues that NGOs have played a compromised, co-opted, and at times destructive role in preparing the ground for and reinforcing neoliberal restructuring, legitimising the so-called democracy promotion of empire. John Allen (2003, 2009) argues that power in practice is relational, complex, often conflicting, with multiple modalities. Allen suggests that empirical study is required, and schemes that focus on different spatial vocabularies (of power-territorial, networked and topological frames) to understand the ways in which power works itself out spatially. The issue of power is central in this chapter since partnerships on Lesvos, although implying a relation between equals and a break with colonial relations, mask a continuing reality of unequal power relationships (Baaz, 2005; de Jong, 2017) among actors who come to the table with different varieties and levels of power. To that end, a good starting point is to explore the interactions and partnerships between humanitarian actors having intervened or settled on Lesvos and Lesvos’ local populations.

4.1 The partnerships and interactions between international actors and local populations

The intervention on Lesbos initiated different kinds of partnerships and interactions with Lesbos' local populations and authorities. Many of my local interviewees, ranging from activists to representatives of local authorities, told me that Lesbos' local community was initially very positive, even enthusiastic towards humanitarian actors' intervention on Lesbos. As Mitsos, a local activist characteristically said, locals were too tired of dealing with the refugee issue on their own and the NGOs' intervention made them feel that they were not alone anymore. They also believed that NGOs would communicate the problem throughout Europe and would bring innovative solutions and expertise. However, the way this intervention evolved made many locals reconsider their beliefs and to become quite critical towards this intervention.

In 2015, during the first weeks of their intervention, many of the humanitarian actors approached local networks and Lesbos municipality in order to get first-hand information on the situation on Lesbos. As Voula, a local activist told me, "during that period many NGOs were just hanging around without really doing anything. They were approaching us, in order to collect as much information as possible and to figure out what the main needs were. When they were finally settled, they forgot us". Likewise, Stavros, a vice-mayor on Lesbos said that, "in the beginning NGOs approached the municipality, and they were currying favours to gain an advantage. They were promising whatever you can imagine. However, when they established their presence, they forgot their promises and they left us alone again".

Such behaviours made many local actors suspicious from an early stage regarding this intervention. At the same time, NGOs had started arriving in the hundreds and this massive intervention made many locals feel that it was like being colonised (Danou, 2017; Sarantidis, 2018b). Also, specific attitudes and practices that many humanitarian actors followed intensified such feelings. It was interesting to observe that most of the meetings between international and local actors were held in English. Voula, a local activist, referred to the UNHCR's Interagency Forum meetings (chapter 4). As she explained, "in the beginning of the crisis these meetings were taking place in Greek and there was translation in English. Nevertheless, the presence of international actors was gradually increasing and the UNHCR decided to start speaking in English". In this way, however, local actors who did not speak the English language were indirectly excluded and, as a result, many locals stopped attending. As Voula said, "those who are not speaking English are excluded. Even the Greek

Ombudsman stated that this was unacceptable. Many local actors have stopped coming, like for example, representatives from the hospital and public services”.

When I visited Moria village, villagers also told me that although they want to, it was practically impossible for them to participate in these meeting, due to the language barrier. Similar concerns were expressed in relation to EASO. Savas, a public servant, informed me that the EASO’s opinion on asylum applications is drafted in English and communication with staff from the Greek asylum service also takes place in English. “This is very problematic”, Savas told me, “because as public servants we are not obliged to speak English and many of us do not speak the English language properly. Thus, we speak with EASO in broken English for issues that are very critical for the asylum seekers’ lives”. He also said that the language issue has generated much frustration for the Greek public servants working in camps. “It is very common to speak with colleagues and share a common complaint: that we live in our country, but we cannot communicate in Greek. This is a kind of colonisation”.

As the Kenyan novelist and post-colonial theorist Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (1986) showed, language is a weapon and a site of intense neo-colonial conflict. Imposing languages is a colonial practice and part of the systematic oppression of imperialism in neo-colonial societies. Apart from the language issue the use of too many abbreviations in English during the UNHCR Interagency Forum was equally problematic. To mention only a few, “PWG”, for Protection Working Group, “ESWG”, for Education Sector Working Group, “SGBV”, for Sexual and Gender Based Violence, “PWSN”, for Persons with Specific Needs, “UAMs/SC”, for Unaccompanied Minors and Separated Children. Even for people like myself, who had gathered some expertise in refugee protection, it was difficult to follow the meaning of all these acronyms. Even the names of many NGOs were referred to with an abbreviation – e.g. DRC, for Danish Refugee Council. It is acknowledged that this “development speak” serves to maintain the status of expertise of western development workers despite claims to participatory approaches and empowerment (Kapoor, 2008).

At this point, it is interesting to explore what the notion of partnership should involve, because the intervening actors on Lesvos established various forms of partnership with local actors. The Development Assistance Committee of the OECD (1996, p. 13) describes the partnership between donor and recipient, or the partners involved in the following way:

In a partnership, development co-operation does not try to do things for developing countries and their people, but with them. It must be seen as a collaborative effort to help them increase their capacities to do things for themselves. Paternalistic approaches have no place in this framework. In a true partnership, local actors should progressively take the lead, while external partners back their efforts to assume greater responsibility for their own development.

Therefore, the above quote implies that a partnership should be founded on equal relationships among the actors involved. However, literature suggests that development cooperation is frequently characterised by unequal power relations when the donor sets up the rules of the game (chapter 4), and also by conflicting and competing interests. Power inequalities are also crucial, in the case that partners' goals and interests "do not fit the rules of the game set up by the donor and must therefore be downplayed and kept hidden" (Baaz, 2005, p. 22). During my interviews with various local stakeholders, I was informed that it was a common practice for NGOs to undertake initiatives and overlook the point of view of these local actors. "They are not democratically elected, they are accountable to their donors and not to us, what do you expect?" Stavros, a vice mayor ironically told me. Neera Chandhoke (2009, p. 812), who explored the issues of participation, representation and democracy in contemporary India argues that an emerging question is whether nongovernmental actors can "stand in" for citizens and speak for them, without ever having fought an election, been authorized, or held accountable. She stresses that they cannot always be held accountable, because representation to constituencies other than their donors is not necessarily their job.

In addition, the resources and status of any large NGO can bring a certain level of power imbalance to any relationship with local partners (Groves and Hinton, 2004, p. 115). Fowler (1998, in Mohan, 2002, p. 14), refers to the notion of paternalism by Northern NGOs and Baaz (2005) speaks about inequalities that often exist between the identities of partners within development projects, with the donor portrayed as superior, active and reliable, while the recipient partner is portrayed as inferior, passive and unreliable. Baaz (Ibid. pp.76, 171) also observes that when the 'partner' resists, this is not seen as resistance, but attributed to the cultural/racial incapacity of the partner. As a result, the idea of one partner taking the lead while the other backs their efforts does not have the same sense of mutually agreed goals and reciprocity suggested of a true partnership. In this regard Robinson et al. (2000)

argue that relationships between organisations can be based on competition, coordination or cooperation but these relationships do not all constitute partnerships. These different types of relationship vary most markedly in the levels of trust and the power balance between those involved. David Mosse (2010) refers to the notion of power by including not only power as the direct assertion of will but also ‘agenda-setting power’ that sets the terms in which various notions can become (or fail to become) politicised.

By taking the above debates into consideration, in the next two subsections I focus on the collaborations and interactions between some of the intervening actors on Lesbos and local authorities, as well as local civil society.

4.1.1 Local authorities

In this subsection I focus on Lesbos’ municipality, public services and representatives from villages and their interactions or collaborations with the various intervening actors. As I observed many local stakeholders were sceptical, frustrated or even angry with the behaviours and practices of many of these actors. As I showed in the previous chapter many locals demonised NGOs and their criticism towards them was based to an extent on speculations. Nevertheless, my overall impression was that many locals also experienced this intervention as an external intrusion, complaining that their voices and concerns were overlooked by the vast majority of the humanitarian actors on Lesbos.

Lesbos’ municipality spokesperson told me that the main interaction that the municipality has with NGOs is at the camp of Kara-Tepe, which is run by Lesbos’ municipality. The case of Kara-Tepe, the second biggest camp on Lesbos, is interesting because of the nature of partnership between the municipality and humanitarian actors. Lesbos municipality is responsible for the site management, but it does not have the financial means to support it and it is therefore dependent on all of the actors working there, ranging from IOs, NGOs and volunteers; even the municipality working staff were paid by the UNHCR. All of these actors are practically in charge of site management, as many of my interlocutors told me. However, as I found, this kind of partnership established an enduring dependency relationship between the municipality and the humanitarian actors. Similarly, the main camp of Moria is practically administered by intervening actors such as Frontex and EASO,⁵⁰ which I mentioned before, as well as (I)NGOs. Thanos, an activist lawyer, referred to an NGO that

⁵⁰ Frontex and EASO are less involved in Kara-Tepe, because asylum procedures by EASO and screening procedures by Frontex are mainly conducted at Moria camp. Afterwards some of the refugees who are recognised as “vulnerable” are transferred to Kara-Tepe camp.

has the full responsibility of site management in Moria camp, suggesting that there are NGOs like this one which are in a position where “nobody can touch them, because they operate as a state within a state”. He referred to the following example:

This NGO was accused of proselytising refugees at Moria camp, and when local authorities raised the issue, the NGO answered in a neo-colonial style, by claiming that ‘we do not care if refugees complain. In their countries it is not allowed to speak about other religions, but they are in Europe now and we have freedom of expression here’. However, no one told them that you cannot proselytise people who are depended on you.

The above interview extract shows how some of the big intervening actors disrespect and ignore both local authorities’ and refugees’ voices, treating them as ignorant and uncivilised. “They frequently have a mentality of superiority, suggesting ‘we are the civilised experts, we have the know-how and we will teach you how to behave and act’”, Thanos told me. Periklis, the president of a village from the north told me that, “NGOs are coming here as experts, pointing out how we must behave towards refugees. We have the know-how of helping refugees since 2005. Where have all these NGOs been before?” The above concerns expressed by locals echo Todorova’s (1997) argument that Western Europe produces discourses about its superiority, while evaluating the Balkan region as backward. Such binary representations also reinforce certain power relations between the colonial power and the colonized (Moore-Gilbert, 1997, p. 23), as the knowledge created by such representations produces inequality in power relations.

Inequality in power relations also became evident when I spoke with representatives of Lesbos’ villages who found the behaviour of various NGOs insulting. Erato, a president of a village near Moria, complained that NGOs were treating them like “poor indigenous people”. As she said, “they wanted to provide us with kits with relief items. I had a discussion with the residents of the village and we decided that we must not accept such offers. It was like they wanted to buy us off”. As Sylvia, a local volunteer commented, “this was like saying to locals, ‘we know that you live in destitution, take these gifts and shut up’.” Similar worries were expressed by four more village presidents. Maria, a local NGO representative, referred to an example showing how INGOs frequently disregard the point of view of local authorities. As she said:

We wanted to rent a shelter to accommodate refugees, but the first thing we did was to inform the neighbours and the nearby local authorities and discuss with them potential problems that would arise. Finally, everyone was happy, and the shelter now works without any problems, there are no complaints raised by locals. Most of the European NGOs never do this, because they don't care what local authorities think. This makes locals consider them as intruders.

Another interesting issue was the interactions between NGOs and public services. As I found, these interactions were not always founded on a relation between equals and did not constitute a significant break with colonial relations. As I explained in chapter 2, NGOs were referring hundreds of refugees' cases to public services, without previously having any communication with the services' directors, and even avoiding any kind of interaction with them. However, "this was making refugees' lives even more difficult; they were queuing for hours at these services, while public servants were close to a nervous breakdown, due to the high pressure of work", one of these public services' director told me. The fact that international NGOs avoided contacting these services to explore their capacity and discuss with their directors' potential solutions was quite problematic. It revealed that they were ignorant or indifferent concerning the "crisis within the crisis", which has consequences on the operation of local services which are understaffed and could hardly provide adequate services even for Lesbos' local populations. A major complaint by most of the local services' directors was that NGOs advise refugees to visit these services without previously explaining to them what documents they must provide and sometimes even misinforming them. As Panagiota told me,

some refugees are coming to our service just because NGOs told them to do so. There were recently groups asking for a 'bus card', because some NGO workers misinformed them that we can provide them a discount card for transportation. We have no interpretation service and the whole process goes slowly, while locals are complaining about these long queues and delays.

Fotis, the director of another public service was furious with some NGOs. As he explained:

They are bringing here refugees with mini-buses and they just abandon them outside of our service, without further helping them. They do not even come here to discuss with us how we can deal with these huge queues, or at least to help us with the interpretation, because these NGOs have interpreters.

Thekla, who had worked as a nurse in the past, told me that NGOs are frequently intervening at Mytilene hospital for cases of vulnerable refugees to be prioritised. “They are sometimes threatening the hospital working staff that if they do not prioritise their cases, they will report it; this causes complaints by locals who are queuing for hours at the hospital, watching the NGOs ignoring them”.

To sum up, my fieldwork data shows that although local authorities recognised that without the intervention of (I)NGOs the situation for both refugees and locals could have been very difficult in the first year of the refugee crisis, at the same time they gradually became more sceptical about NGOs’ practices and behaviour. They perceived the NGOs’ refugee response as an external intervention accompanied by discourses about their superiority. Moreover, the nature of local authorities’ interactions with various intervening actors revealed asymmetrical power and post-colonial relations. In the next subsection I focus on the interactions and collaborations between intervening actors and Lesvos’ civil society.

4.1.2 Local civil society

As I explained in the previous chapter, local NGOs and former grassroots movements, which became NGOs in the aftermath of the refugee crisis, established partnerships with some of the intervening IOs and INGOs, who became their donors. These organisations thus started employing hundreds of local unemployed people and renting shelters for the accommodation of refugees. As I showed, this interaction initiated an NGOisation process that led in some ways to an institutionalisation, professionalisation, depoliticisation and demobilisation of social movements on Lesvos. Similarly, local volunteers and activists who were not working for any NGO also had interactions with these intervening actors, in order to deal with the various problems that the border regime on Lesvos was generating.

In this subsection I further explore the nature of these collaborations and interactions, in terms of patronising and unequal power relationships and post-colonial practices. Many of my interlocutors argued that some of the intervening actors were treating local civil society

as “indigenous and exotic”, that they evoked stereotypes, disregarding the local culture and customs, and ignoring or being indifferent towards the needs of local populations, who were experiencing a “crisis within a crisis”, by communicating with locals only in English and by having more privileged labour rights in relation to their Greek colleagues. These concerns resonate with imperialist discourses framing the Balkan region as primitive requiring some form of imperial oversight (Vukov, 2013). They also echo Mudimbe’s (1988) reference to “ethnocentrism”, since Lesbos’ civil society culture and values were judged mainly by the values and standards of the intervening actors’ practices and culture. The analysis of the interactions between Lesbos’ civil society and the various intervening actors also shows how Greek culture is used as an explanatory frame for its supposed inferiority in the way ‘race’ functioned in colonial times (Kothari, 2006) and that culture can lead to an approach according to which “Western” values are promoted as universal (Kapoor, 2008).

In particular, my interviewees spoke about patronising or even humiliating behaviour by some INGOs, who treated their Greek working staff or volunteers as unskilled or as their servants. Vaso told me that in 2015 a new field coordinator of the UNHCR arrived on Lesbos:

She arrived on the island with an attitude suggesting, ‘I am in charge here’ but in practice she screwed up everything. She was speaking to everyone as a superior. I remember an incident at the port of Mytilene where there were hundreds of refugees. She was giving commands to everyone. Not only to the UNHCR staff but mainly to local volunteers and activists. At some point she told me, ‘do you see that pregnant woman? Transfer her to the hospital!’ And I asked her ‘why you command me to transfer her at the hospital? I am just a volunteer.’

Panagitsa, a local volunteering for up to three decades for one of the most well-known international humanitarian organisations described to me her experience of when international staff from this organisation arrived on Lesbos. As she said:

Our team consists of mainly older women and we are trying to do our best to help refugees. When the international staff arrived, they were treating us as their servants. They were paid for their work, but they were commanding us, the volunteers, to carry heavy boxes with

necessities for refugees. They were drinking their coffees and watching us carrying these boxes and just giving instructions. This was really humiliating! When I returned home that day I started crying.

Panagitsa's quote resonates with post-colonial critiques of the relation between international and local NGO staff or volunteers in the developing world. As Roth (2012, p. 1464) argues, national staff are often critical of international aid workers who overlook their competence, do not consult the local population and beneficiaries about their needs and interests, and ignore local culture. During my fieldwork it was interesting to listen many of my interviewees explaining how some of the intervening actors were perceiving aspects of the Greek mentality and culture. Sylvia referred to her experiences of collaborating with a well-established INGO and interacting with many others during meetings:

It might sound that I exaggerate, but there is often a kind of racism against Greeks. Listening during a meeting, where different nationalities of aid workers participate, including Greeks, people saying in an abominable way, 'Oh... this is so Greek!', is quite insulting. It is also insulting when these NGOs directly or indirectly tell us that we are treating refugees disrespectfully and that we are racists. Even if we suppose that we are treating refugees disrespectfully, I wanted to ask them, 'have you ever tried to find out why is this happening? Are you aware of the socio-political background of this country, which is suffering for so many years as a result of the multiple crises? Why are you blaming a whole country?

In a similar way, Thanos, an activist lawyer, commented on those intervening actors who were blaming their Greek partners and the Greek people in general for the refugee response. As he said:

I find really humiliating the fact that some north Europeans are claiming that locals' refugee response is awful, and this is happening because we are corrupted, lazy and unproductive south-eastern Europeans. You know that I am not a nationalist or a patriot, but the problem is that the stereotype of xenophobia is reproduced in this

way; a xenophobia against the European South, suggesting that North Europeans are superior.

Eirini, a local volunteer, referred to a characteristic incident that took place in 2017 during a public meeting among various actors. A representative of a well-established INGO referred to one of the northern neighbours of Greece and country of the so-called Balkan route as “Macedonia” instead of FYROM.⁵¹ For many Greeks, irrespective of whether they are right or wrong, this is a controversial and sensitive issue of great national significance. As Eirini commented:

He referred to FYROM as Macedonia. His colleague told him that this was not the official name of the country, but he ignored them and kept on referring to FYROM as Macedonia. Whether someone disagrees or not with the name issue s/he has to be very careful when speaking to Greeks for a sensitive national issue and at least show some respect to their point of view.

As Sylvia also commented,

when you intervene into a country you must show some respect to local people’s historical background. You need to be aware of some basic facts concerning their history, as well as the challenges they face in a political and social level. If you want to establish a healthy partnership that will work for the advantage of everybody and bring locals, refugees and NGOs together you need to consider all these dimensions. Otherwise, you behave like a colonialist, who just wants his/her point of view to prevail.

Thekla, an IO worker argued that, “international staff are frequently treating us as second-class workers. The paradox is that this takes place within our own country, where we have first-hand experience of how things work locally”. Locals also referred to salary imbalances between local and international working staff. As an employee at the Greek asylum service told me, “the average salary for Greeks working for the asylum service is 800 Euro per month, while for EASO personnel the salaries can be around 6,000 Euro. We are doing

⁵¹ Two years later, in February 2019, FYROM - after negotiation with Greece - officially changed its name to “North Macedonia” (Testorides, 2019)

exactly the same job, but we earn less money, we have less privileges and this makes us feel like second class workers”. This is a practice traced not only on Lesbos, but also in various other geographical contexts; it is the same as expat-local salaries in many multinational corporation and aid organisations. A project exploring the effects of the wage gap between local and international staff working in lower-income countries (Carr and McWha-Hermann, 2016) found that the wage gap in lower-income countries ranges from 400 – 900% and causes significant resentment among local workers.

Finally, it is important to mention that power is not only exercised by northern actors towards local ones, but also by local actors towards local populations, since colonial governance can be dependent on co-opted people, by giving them status with the colonial regime (Petras, 1999; de Jong and Ataç, 2017). There were several accusations against local NGOs and municipal authorities of clientelism, hidden political agendas and dependency relationships with unemployed locals (Manavis, 2016; Georgoulas, 2017). There are similar findings in other geographical contexts. For example, Mohan (2002, p. 16) observed during his research in Northern Ghana that there were cases of local NGOs behaving in “patronising, dictatorial and bureaucratic ways” towards the populations they assisted. This was also evident during my fieldwork. A characteristic example was a local NGO. Before 2015 they were a small NGO employing a few people and their narratives were quite radical. After 2015 this NGO became one of the biggest on Lesbos. They became partners with the UNHCR and INGOs, by employing hundreds of locals and renting shelter and apartments in order to accommodate refugees. During my interview with the NGOs’ representative, I noticed that their stance towards refugees had changed. They were trying to justify the border regime policies and to hide information from me on the injustices taking place. During our interview, the representative of the NGO tried to downplay the consequences that the geographical restriction has upon refugees and local populations. “I do not understand why we should send refugees to the mainland or Europe. We have this problem here, but we have found ways to cope with it”. However, this argument was conflicting with locals’ and refugees’ common claim that the island needs to be decongested.

This was an indicative example showing that this NGO was aligned with the EU policy makers’ aim to enforce a geographical restriction on refugees’ movement on Lesbos. As a result, by cooperating with local actors and thus giving them the opportunity to participate in their projects, international NGOs and donors can make them adopt their agenda with the local actors becoming part of the *intermediaries’ regime* that I referred to in the previous

chapter. As I mentioned in section 2.2, when referring to the capitulation of the Greek state, positioning the EU and the intervening actors against Greece and Lesvos' populations is not so simple, because the contemporary reality in Greece is complex. The fact that both the Greek state as well as a part of local civil society align with several border regime policies indicates that post-colonialism in Greece and Lesvos is not necessarily perpetrated by a single actor – like the EU and its intervening humanitarian actors – but is cultivated in much more disparate ways by various actors. In the next section I explore one more dimension in relation to the interactions between intervening actors and locals, namely how some of the intervening actors affected some of the locals' values and practices in relation to managing the refugee response.

4.2 Locals' values and practices

As I explained in various parts of this thesis, Lesvos has a long history of refugeeness and this has shaped to a large extent the locals' stance towards refugees. Before the refugee crisis there were numerous grassroot movements and initiatives providing solidarity for arriving refugees. Some of them were radical activists, who were politically motivated; others were “good Samaritans”, locals who had memories of refugeeness, or people evoking their Christian Orthodox values related to altruism. As I explained in the previous chapter, I do not imply that Lesvos' community was exclusively characterised by a spirit of solidarity and altruism, since there were individuals who were indifferent or even xenophobic, but there was still a strong spirit of solidarity. The *Village of All Together*, for example, consisted of 27 different initiatives, organisations and grassroot movements, which is a remarkable number for an island with an overall population of around 85,000. However, some of the values and practices that humanitarian actors shared with local communities affected to an extent locals' solidarity in relation to refugee arrivals in an identical way to what Paulo Freire (1972) termed as “an oppressive cultural action”, whereby aid programmes act as instruments of manipulation, which invade, divide and conquer.

Sofoklis, an activist from Molyvos village explained to me that during the first phase of the refugee crisis many local activists and volunteers “were providing to refugees with necessities, like water, food and clothes. When the big NGOs arrived, things changed; They had huge vans with all these necessities and towards that we all felt tiny. Indirectly they kicked us out, because we were feeling useless”. This echoes the argument that the resources and status of any large NGO can bring a certain level of power imbalance to any relationship with local partners (Groves and Hinton, 2004, p. 115).

Sofoklis also explained that NGOs brought a different mentality:

Before their intervention most of the locals were providing unconditional help. Almost none of the activists or volunteers that I know was connecting the issue of solidarity with making profit. There were some locals taking advantage of the situation, but they were a minority. One of the first things that these NGOs showed us was that someone could make profit by taking advantage the refugee crisis.

As Zan commented, many locals “felt like idiots, because they hadn’t earned any money all these years by helping refugees and they suddenly saw these Europeans coming and making a fortune. They learned from them what donations and crowdfunding means”. Given the high unemployment rates that the financial crisis had generated many activists or “good Samaritans” decided to work for an NGO or to establish their own NGOs. As Thekla, a local activist told me, “they started adopting specific managerial and administration models, which were in many cases different from their pre-existing ones. They now had to dedicate much of their time carrying out administrative work and most importantly they started treating refugees as numbers, instead of human beings”. As Sofoklis mentioned,

when *solidarians* were distributing necessities, they were frequently asking from refugees themselves to collectively decide who needs to be prioritised and everyone was happy. When northern Europeans arrived, instead of following this process they were deciding themselves who has priority and they were distributing a priority number written on a paper. Civilisation! But, isn’t it a kind of colonial mentality? Unfortunately, we gradually adopted similar administrative models.

The interaction between locals and INGOs initiated an NGOisation process (chapter 4) and in many cases, as Petras notes (1999, p. 435) members of socio-political and grassroots movements were co-opted by NGOs. At the same time, the professionalisation of grassroots movements that turned into NGOs also led to an objectification of refugees, who were reduced to a tool used for making profit (Nussbaum, 1995, p. 257). In a sense, the economic

and social survival of some locals became dependent on the refugee arrivals, and also the misery surrounding the everyday lives of refugees and thus the concept of “homo homini lupus” or “your death is my life” (chapter 2) became a new reality for many locals on Lesbos.

Even more importantly, the exceptional border regime that turned Lesbos into a prison island, led to a normalisation of human suffering. Witnessing injustices, violence and people living in humiliating reception conditions became a routine for many locals. This normalisation also applies to the dependence relationships which have been established on Lesbos between local actors and the intervening ones, who became their donors. As I argued in chapter 2, for many locals this relationship of dependence has become a “kind of solution” (Cavafys, 1904). Finally, as I argued in chapter 3, the border regime policies have produced racism and xenophobia, they have divided Lesbos’ local community and challenged social cohesion. This division of local populations is something new for the previously peaceful local community of Lesbos and illustrates how the exceptional border regime has altered pre-existing ways of living and coexisting as a community. It has altered to an extent the values and practices that were part of locals’ collective consciousness. The above described situation brings to mind Mudimbe’s notion of “cultural ethnocentrism”, suggesting that the ideal way of thinking and behaving is as viewed from the lenses of the Western consciousness, cultural and social principles (Mudimbe, 1988, p. 32). In the next section, I focus on the colonisation of Lesbos as a space.

4.3 Colonising the locale: Lesbos as a humanitarian and militarised zone

A striking feature of the humanitarian and security intervention on Lesbos was the sudden or even brutal transformation of a whole region into a prison island (chapter 3), into a humanitarian and at the same time militarised zone, occupied or demarcated by various intervening actors. As Franck (2018, p. 200) observes, these intervening actors constitute an institutional feature of the way contemporary border regimes are governed and sustained. However, the occupation and control of other people’s land (Loomba, 2005, p. 8) is regarded as an important element of colonialism. As Smirl (2015) argues, contemporary material and spatial practices of humanitarian response may continue to invoke and reproduce colonial power relations.

As I observed during my fieldwork, Lesbos had turned into a *theme park* for some of the researchers, journalists, celebrities, NGO staff visiting the island, state and EU officials, thousands of volunteers as well as *solitourists*, as locals used to call some of the international

volunteers who were combining their solidarity for refugees with (disaster)⁵² tourism. The above actors were arriving on Lesbos on an almost daily basis and frequently a local fixer was guiding them to sites around the island. As Omiros, one of my interviewees who has worked as a fixer in the past explained, a common route for visitors is the following: *PIKPA* (an open refugee camp), *Mosaic Support Centre* (a collaborative project run by local and European NGOs), *Kara-Tepe* (the municipality camp), *Moria camp* and the *Olive Grove* (a makeshift camp next to Moria camp). Next, a visit takes place to the mountain near Moria in order for the visitor to take a panoramic picture of the camp, then a visit to the “life vest graveyard” at the village of Molyvos (the municipal dump where almost a million of life vests are deposited), a visit to graveyards of refugees at two different sites on Lesbos, and also visits to coasts where refugees arrive. Voula argued that these actors “occupied” Lesbos and also that:

For many of them Lesbos was an ideal place to work, with salaries like those they had in Sudan. They were also entitled to accommodation, cars etc., but here there were no bombs. They were drinking their coffees, they were earning a lot of money, without practically doing any substantial work... fantastic! There is a kind of humanitarian tourism. At some point I could not go out for a coffee, because cafes and bars were overcrowded by NGO staff and *solitourists*. They were wearing their jackets and badges, they were everywhere. It was like an invasion.

For some locals the attitude of many NGOs was like, “we are in a third world country where we can earn a lot of money, enjoy our presence here and behave as we want”, Anna, a local activist told me. She explained that,

you see these NGO people, they are driving around with these massive jeeps, they drive from Mytilene to Moria to work, which is 6 km; on the bus it is a 2 Euros return ticket. To hire those [Jeeps] is 90-120 Euros a day. Everyone has one on an everyday basis and they do not share it with more people, but everyone has his/her own. We are watching them driving up and down these roads when refugees

⁵² “Disaster tourism” denotes situations where the tourism product is generated within, and from, the aftermath of a major disaster or traumatic event (Gotham, 2015).

are walking with their families, their babies in their arms, they are walking in 40 degree heat; and it's the volunteers that give them water and everything else, while the UNHCR staff are running up and down in the restaurants eating big meals and they cannot even give a bottle of water; they are getting a hardship benefit. They are getting paid to live in Mytilene which is a thriving town, they are all in the restaurants in Mytilene. They are getting paid the same to be in Greece, living in a 5-star hotel with all expenses paid as they do in Mogadishu.

As Rozakou (2017) observes, locals saw their island being transformed into a “Third World” country. All over the island the vests of humanitarian workers and their logos coloured public space and demarcated zones of operation, sociality and, ultimately, sovereignty over space. It was thus interesting to observe the “branding” of humanitarian spaces on Lesbos. As Franck (2018, pp. 201–202) observed, apart from professionals walking around in branded vests, everything from rubbish bins to refugee housing units, blankets, buses, toilets and information boards, carried the labels of organisations. As she notes, “the branding of these spaces needs to be seen in the broader context of the marketisation of humanitarian action. Making their contributions “on the ground” visible to major funders is central to the operations of these organisations”. Thekla, an IO worker, told me: “Do you see all these NGO vans passing by? Mytilene is full of these NGO vans with their logos, this happens all day. They are parking anywhere they want, and the police is not giving them a ticket. If I do this as a local, I will pay a fine. They are beyond law!”.

Orsini (2015), by referring to Lampedusa shows how in October 2013, when 360 asylum seekers lost their lives when their boat capsized less than a mile from Lampedusa, the island was converted from a fishing island into a tourist destination and a location of today's European border regime. Lampedusa has many similarities with Lesbos, due to the sudden transformation of these islands into a “theatrical spectacle” (2018, p. 150), as Gillespie names it, or a “border spectacle”, according to De Genova (2013). Both Lampedusa and Lesbos suddenly became famous and a synonym for the massive border crossings, the misery, suffering, screams, and even deaths of refugees (Iliadou, 2019b).

Sokratis, a local professional, argued that even from the beginning of the refugee crisis the island was symbolically colonised, through the rental of Mytilene's historic buildings.

“NGOs started renting the *archontika*⁵³, which are not just tourist attractions but also the symbol for Mytilene”. As Mitsos, a local activist commented, “this awoke memories of older locals, when Germans occupied some of these buildings during World War II”. Similar associations also arose in various other cases. As Vradis et al. (2019, p. 91) observed during their research on Lesbos, the municipal Kara-Tepe camp was built on a site where refugees from Asia Minor had settled in 1922 and planted olive trees. However, the UNHCR took the unilateral decision to expand the site of Kara-Tepe, despite pleas from members of the local authority to consider alternative venues. The olive trees had to be removed and with them the traces of the settlement of refugees from Asia Minor on the island. Moreover, Tasos, the president of Moria village and people at Morias’ *Kafeneio* with whom I spoke with were furious, because of the fact that Moria, the village where their grandmothers and grandfathers were raised, had become synonymous with Moria camp. As Tasos explained,

NGOs, refugees and the press are shouting that ‘Moria is not good’, but Moria is our village and not the camp; locals have strong emotional links with the place. In the beginning we asked from some NGOs not to call the camp ‘Moria’, but they ignored us. Now it is too late.

Equally problematic was the occupancy of municipal, public or private spaces by some NGOs. As Lesbos’ vice-Mayor told me, there were many cases of NGOs, which occupied public and municipal spaces, without asking for any authorisation. This concern was also expressed by the presidents of villages, not only regarding the occupation of municipal land, but also the occupation of Lesbos’ coasts. They also complained that when some NGOs leave the occupied areas they do not clean them or they throw their rubbish into olive tree allotments and rivers. This indicates that they do not respect the place and its people, they argued. Periklis, the president of a north village on Lesbos said that, “some villagers were trying to go and help the refugees arriving, and NGOs were not allowing them to have access at public beaches.”

Zan, a local activist, referred to authoritarian behaviours and practices by Frontex’s working staff, listing various examples. Referring to one of these examples he said that:

⁵³ “Archontika” are the mansions of the urban class, built in Provincial, Bavarian and neoclassical styles. They are examples of the eclectic architecture that dominated Mytilene in the last century.

We were at Agios Ermogenis, where there is a beach and a small tavern. One of these Frontex jeeps arrived and they parked at the entrance of the beach, they blocked it and people could not have direct access to the beach. Some bullies came out, they went to swim and after they started staring at a volunteer's rescue boat that was there. They were swearing and calling the volunteers 'you son of a bitch'. This is just an example, such behaviours are very common.

As Zan also observed it is very usual to see Frontex jeeps in front of beaches and cafes and the Frontex staff drinking their beers. "I told them one day that you have to declare to the tax office how are you using your car". Mihalis, a local professional, also referred to various incidents that took place in bars and cafes of Mytilene:

Two months ago, people from Frontex came at my bar and their attitude was challenging. They were some bullies and fascists from Poland. They were shouting to my customers that 'you are welcoming refugees, but this place must only be for the Greeks'. Their discourse was political and insulting. I can mention various other incidents at other bars and cafes that have taken place during the past two years and some of these have also been reported in the local press.

However, as many of my interlocutors informed me, there are unfortunately no sanctions by the Greek authorities for such practices. Mytilene police prefer not to interfere, Anna a local activist told me. She also said that,

what is the most disturbing thing for locals, is that you have a foreign police force, exercising power at your own place. I wanted to travel by ship from Mytilene to Athens, and Frontex people stopped me to ask for my ID. The last time we had a foreign authority here, in a different scale of course, was during the World War II occupation of Greece.

The above quotes regarding Frontex's intervention and behaviour relate to the transformation of Lesbos into a space of control and panoptical surveillance as a result of the border regime policies (chapter 4). Lesbos has been transformed from a quiet and peaceful place in the past, into a securitised and militarised zone. The Greek state submitted the control of the country's borders to NATO and Frontex, while within Mytilene and the villages near the main camps there is increased presence of Frontex and military police patrolling 24 hours a day and frequently stopping, searching and arresting people.

During my fieldwork I noticed that no one on Lesbos, including refugees, activists, volunteers, and even researchers could really escape from the routinised practices of control and panoptical surveillance (Tazzioli and Walters, 2016, p. 446) being enforced beyond the camp. Even researchers conducting fieldwork on Lesbos were likely to be stopped and searched. As one researcher told me, she was stopped, searched and asked for identification by the police while conducting fieldwork on Lesbos. As I mentioned in chapter 1, during a press conference on fake news that I attended in September 2018, I was photographed by undercover police. The aforementioned processes, as Tazzioli (2017) notes, "are processes through which people are governed, contained and stranded beyond a bordered zone of processing or containment".

Many residents of Mytilene were also complaining that the port of Mytilene was occupied by Frontex military vessels. "It is a really depressing picture for locals seeing this beautiful port, which is one of Mytilene's main attractions, the site where Mytilene residents go every evening for a walk, being occupied by military vessels" Panagitsa, a local volunteer, told me. More recently, in February 2020, during intense clashes between the Greek riot police and locals more than sixty people were injured, while police helicopters and drones were flying across Lesbos for days, which literally made the island look like a "war zone" (Voria.gr, 2020). This was a further indication showing that the state of exception on Lesbos has become routinised and permanent, with devastating consequences for both refugees and locals. At the same time the above described spatial practices of humanitarian and surveillance response on Lesbos invoked and reproduced colonial power relations.

Conclusion

In this chapter I argued that the "state of exception" in Greece during the past 10 years has given space for an already established crypto-colonial situation – mostly expressed through historical and cultural characteristics – to escalate and express itself in new ways including

through new political, economic and discursive realities. Although Herzfeld's concept of "crypto-colonialism" brought into focus Greece as a potential colonial space and inspired me to apply this perspective to Lesbos, my empirical findings indicated that a new type of colonialism has gradually emerged in Greece and Lesbos. The earlier crypto-colonialism has become increasingly overt and thus the concept needs to be expanded, by considering post-colonial literature. By drawing on the post-colonial concepts of orientalism, Balkanism, Europeanisation, ethnocentrism and trusteeship I demonstrated the post-colonial continuities with empirical realities in contemporary Greece and Lesbos.

In order to understand the nuances of different scales of governance I explored how different levels (international, national, local) interact. As I showed, we should not simply position Greece and Lesbos against the "West", in Herzfeld's terms, because colonialism in Greece and Lesbos is not necessarily perpetrated by a single actor but is cultivated in much more disparate ways by multiple sovereignties. Consequently, the Greek state as well as internal elites have in many cases aligned with the enforcement of various EU exceptional policies and have reproduced colonial features. This stance of the Greek state has made Lesbos' populations feel as if they have been abandoned by law, or even "invaded" not only by the EU and its intervening actors but also by the Greek state. By focusing on a local level, I also found that a part of Lesbos' local populations is co-opted into post-colonial governance mainly due to funding dependence.

Despite the Greek state's alignment with various exceptional policies I also showed that this capitulation is often a result of threats and coercion by the EU and a disregard for democratic legitimacy, public contest and debate. Also, through the imposition of enhanced surveillance and trusteeship the EU often treats the Greek state as an undeserving colonial subject that needs to be reformed and civilised. In this way colonial discourses are reproduced, which have been captured by the notions of Orientalism, Balkanism and ethnocentrism. Regarding the various intervening actors and their interactions with the Greek state I showed that many of these actors take control of the situation on Lesbos by frequently substituting and overruling the Greek administration, by imposing managerial models and inevitably producing discourses about their superiority.

On a local level I used locals' perspective to shed more light on the impact of certain international and national interventions. In particular, I explored the various partnerships and interactions established between local and intervening actors. Although the notion of

partnership implies a relation between equals and a break with colonial relations, I found that unequal power relationships are established. Locals frequently perceive these interventions as an external intrusion accompanied by discourses on intervening actors' superiority. Furthermore, various humanitarian actors see Lesvos' populations as possessing specific characteristics, as being backward, exotic, or even racists. This stance reproduces power relations between the colonial power and the 'colonised'. By also bringing new administrative and managerial models into the field the intervention on Lesvos has altered the values and practices that were part of locals' collective consciousness. Last but not least, Lesvos as a space has brutally changed in the past five years, due to the border regime policies and interventions. The transformation of Lesvos into a prison island, a militarised, securitised and humanitarian zone shows how spatial practices of humanitarian and security response invoke and reproduce colonial power relations.

The situation analysed above has changed locals' everyday lives, making them feel abandoned by law, invaded and colonised. As I further discuss in the conclusion of my thesis the EU's interventionist and colonial strategy, treating Greece as part of the "global South", indicates that the EU intends to continue to use whole Greek regions as buffer zones for an indefinite period of time in order to keep refugees stranded there and deter them from reaching more prosperous EU countries. This stance has a negative impact on the everyday lives of both refugees and locals and demonstrates the need for their voices to be amplified and considered more seriously by the Greek state, the EU and the various intervening actors.

Conclusion

Introduction

In this thesis I focused on the island of Lesbos as the epicenter of the 2015 refugee crisis. I argued that although there is considerable and growing academic literature focusing on Lesbos as a case study, this mainly concerns refugees and border practices, and the points of view and experiences of Lesbos' local populations, who are also affected by the refugee crisis, are overlooked. Not only scholars, but also policy makers, and other intervening actors on Lesbos, including the Greek state, have failed to pay attention to the voices and concerns of local populations on Lesbos. Considering the profound effect that the overlapping Greek crises and the subsequent imposition of a state of exception had on the local populations, I employed their perspective to shed more light on the impact of certain international and national interventions on their lives.

The thesis thus explored why and how the refugee crisis, which was initially framed as a temporary emergency, became enduring and mundane. I showed how this protracted situation affected locals' everyday lives by amplifying preexisting problems, related to consequences of the financial crisis. Through the perspective of locals and their interactions with various intervening actors I also explored how the "crisis within the crisis" and the endurance of the state of exception has influenced the Greek state's sovereignty as well as regular democratic procedures on Lesbos. Informed by the literature gaps identified in the introductory chapter and guided by the theoretical approaches discussed within my thesis, I formulated the following main research question:

- How has the refugee crisis and its aftermath affected Lesbos' local populations?

To answer this question, I considered three further questions:

1. What are the implications of the enduring "crises" and exceptional policies for local populations' everyday lives?
2. What are the roles of the main intervening actors on Lesbos and how do locals interact with these actors?
3. How has the 'crisis within the crisis' and the endurance of the state of emergency influenced the Greek state's sovereignty as well as regular democratic procedures on Lesbos and how has this affected local populations?

In order to answer the above research questions, I collected 61 semi-structured interviews with local, state and international actors, as well as numerous documentary sources. I also conducted non-participant observation during my fieldwork (01/09/2018 - 16/11/2018) and have drawn on different bodies of theory to analyse this data. I thus employed reflections on individual experiences as material to explore wider structural issues (de Jong, 2017, p. 5; Minh-Ha, 1991) like the notion of crisis, permanent emergencies, humanitarian and security interventions and post-colonialism.

Drawing on critical migration and border studies, I framed my first and third sub-research questions, providing insights on how borders function, to whose benefit these borders function, and who is affected by various border policies. By drawing on this literature and taking advantage of my legal training as a lawyer specialised in international law, I also critically discussed how border regime policies were enforced by disregarding the rule of law and the voices of the populations being affected by these policies. I paid particular attention to the strands of Giorgio Agamben's (2005) work which have been taken up in migration studies, in particular the notion of the "state of exception". Agamben's work was useful in explaining how various exceptional border policies on Lesbos become enduring and violate the rule of law in terms of legitimisation and democratic accountability, sidelining the voices and concerns of local populations who frequently find themselves abandoned by law. I also employed concepts from critical humanitarianism and development literature, which provided me with the conceptual tools to analyse my data and answer the second research question. The fact that a humanitarian intervention took place on Lesbos made it relevant to draw on critical literature on humanitarianism and development, in order to understand the notion of "humanitarian intervention", how and why it takes place, what interests it serves and what are the roles of the intervening actors. This literature also provided insights into what such intervention might mean to local populations who interact with the intervening actors. Finally, post-colonial theory helped me to frame my third sub-research question and provided a framework for analysing my empirical data. By considering various post-colonial features including political, economic and discursive components I explained how various interventions have influenced Greek sovereignty as well as regular democratic procedures on Lesbos.

In chapter 1 titled "Methods and methodological approaches" I outlined the methodology I used to address my research questions. I also addressed the challenges that I encountered during my fieldwork and provided a number of reflections concerning ethics and

positionality. As I explained, I used multiple methods to gain an in-depth understanding of the various interactions among different actors on Lesbos. In the four subsequent chapters I used the data gathered through all of the above methods.

Chapter 2, titled “A crisis within a crisis”, responded to my first sub-research question. I argued that the refugee crisis’ consequences on local populations’ everyday lives cannot be isolated from Greece’s most recent economic, social and political developments, and in particular, from what is framed as the Greek “financial crisis”. I showed how the combination of various interventions during the Greek crises created a suffocating environment for Lesbos’ local populations, characterised by various economic, social, psychological, and environmental implications.

Arguing that the notion of crisis is deeply intertwined with the notion of permanent emergency, which is characterised by the enforcement of exceptional measures and policies, in my third chapter, “The border regime as a state of exception”, I explored how the enduring 2015 refugee crisis can be interpreted as a “state of exception” (Agamben, 2005). This chapter responded to the first and (partly) the third research questions. I explained how various exceptional “border regime” policies violate the rule of law in terms of legitimisation and democratic accountability, side-lining the voices and concerns of local populations who frequently feel abandoned by law. I also argued that Lesbos needs to be conceptualised as a particular camp and a “prison island”, where multiple sovereignties interact and frequently create an effect that mirrors that of a single sovereign.

Chapter 4, “The humanitarian and security actors enabling the border regime”, responded to my second research question. I focused on the processes and practices enacted on Lesbos, which are characterised by the intervention of multiple non-state actors. I explored these actors’ roles as well as their interactions with local populations. I focused on why and how some of these actors enable and materialise enduring border regime policies on the ground, thereby reproducing a permanent emergency and a state of exception.

In my final substantial chapter 5, “Forms of colonialism in Greece and Lesbos”, which mainly responded to my third research question, I explored how forms of colonialism are constructed through various kinds of intervention in Greece and Lesbos. I argued that the “state of exception” in Greece during the past 10 years has given space for an already

established crypto-colonial context to escalate and express itself in various ways including through political, economic and discursive components.

In this chapter I first discuss the key findings of my research and then, in section 2, I refer to the contribution and broader implications of this research. In section 3, I make some further observations in relation to this thesis by also referring to future directions of research. Finally, in section 4, I conclude the chapter by referring to various structural changes that need to take place, in order for the everyday lives of populations affected by various exceptional policies to be improved.

1. Key research findings

1.1 The consequences of the enduring crises

One of my key arguments in this thesis was that in order to get an overall picture of the consequences of the refugee crisis on local populations' everyday lives, the refugee crisis needs to be interlinked with the Greek financial crisis. The 2010 financial crisis had a negative impact on the efficient reception of refugees arriving to Greece and paved the way for the intervention of external actors during the years of the refugee crisis. Furthermore, the financial crisis, which was about the “failed” Greek state (Pappas, 2011), set the conditions for the 2015 exceptional border functions to be usurped by various external intervening actors. I argued that these crises and interventions, instead of remedying alleged failings of the Greek state, created a suffocating environment for Lesbos' populations, with the consequences of the refugee crisis adding to the consequences of the financial crisis and becoming a shock within a shock (Klein, 2007) for locals.

I explored the various economic, social, psychological, and environmental implications of the “crisis within the crisis” on Lesbos' local community. As I found, on the one hand, the refugee crisis has become a “kind of solution” (Cavafys, 1904) for many locals who have found themselves in unemployment and precariousness in the aftermath of the financial crisis. Moreover, for some locals the refugee crisis was an opportunity to experience other cultures and turned Lesbos, which is a relatively conservative community, into a multicultural community. On the other hand, the refugee crisis became for many locals an additional source of frustration that added to the negative impacts of the financial crisis. Local services and infrastructures were further degraded, while environmental consequences were also considerable. Locals' psychological wellbeing has been negatively affected, with consequences both on an individual and a collective level. Moreover, for some locals who

saw their businesses, or their everyday lives negatively affected, refugees became an ideal scapegoat. This new reality on Lesbos created disputes among locals who had opposing interests or ideologies and created parallel communities which were living alongside but not with one another. Therefore, the refugee crisis disrupted previous forms of social cohesion by also allowing space for xenophobia and racist violence by locals targeting not only refugees, but also humanitarian workers and activists. At the time of writing, this situation is escalating further.

1.2 States of exception and permanent emergencies

Although the European Commission, the Greek state and the UNHCR officially declared that from February 2017 the emergency status of Lesbos was discontinued, my own experience was quite different. I have demonstrated that almost five years after the beginning of the refugee crisis the various interventions and exceptional policies on Lesbos are still in effect and have become normalised and routinised with no signs of positive change so far. Rather, the whole situation has been getting worse for both refugees and locals on Lesbos. What was exceptional and temporary during 2015 and 2016 gradually became the rule, in Agamben's terms. The result is what Butler (2006, p. 61) frames as "a production of a paralegal universe that goes by the name of law". Thus, Lesbos became an exceptional space, where the rule of law is systematically violated in the name of crisis, emergency, humanitarianism and security. The shock doctrine and the politics of fear have played an essential role in normalising this exceptional situation on Lesbos. The repeated "shock therapy" (Klein, 2007) local populations of Lesbos have been experiencing from 2010 onwards, combined with an enduring state of fear that any other alternative would be catastrophic, restricted the spaces of resistance against the exceptional policies being enforced during the refugee crisis.

A further consequence of the normalisation of the state of exception was that the democratic principle of the separation of powers collapsed indefinitely; the Greek executive power or EU executive branches have absorbed Greece's legislative power and Greek administrative power has expanded into the legislative or judicial sphere. Policy makers continue overlooking the voices of locals on Lesbos, because as I argued, the border regime policies are *ultra vires* and devoid of democratic legitimacy, public contest and debate. A consequence of policies such as the EU-Turkey Statement and the geographical restriction of refugees' movement was that Lesbos turned into a "prison island" where locals and

refugees found themselves abandoned by law, with different consequences for each of these populations.

1.3 The intervening actors' dependence on funding

As I showed in my thesis, the intervention of humanitarian actors on Lesbos during the first year of the refugee crisis helped to avoid human catastrophes and also provided important assistance for local authorities and activists who were until then dealing with the refugee arrivals on their own. I found that these humanitarian actors were frequently unfairly demonised and criminalised by local and state actors or EU agencies. While acknowledging the positive contribution of these actors and the unfair accusations against them, I also argued that they contributed to enabling exceptional policies on the ground for indefinite periods of time. A key argument was that the enforcement of exceptional policies by the EU is one of the two elements of the border regime. The second element relates to those intervening actors that enabled and materialised border policies on Lesbos and became “the operational arm” (Rantsiou, 2017) of the EU’s exceptional policies. As I demonstrated, their dependence on funding by their donors can be quite problematic. I argued that the dependence of humanitarian actors on EU funding often led to their alignment with certain political functions, interests and agendas. The fact that the EU is the main donor for many of the humanitarian actors on Lesbos establishes a relationship of dependency and also enables these actors to act as intermediaries between local authorities, the Greek state and the EU in order to embed border policies locally. This process frequently results in silencing injustices that the EU border policies produce and gives space for exceptional political agendas to be embedded locally. I also showed in what ways humanitarian actors on Lesbos contribute to making the EU’s exceptional measures and policies enduring and permanent. I argued that humanitarian actors’ provision of necessities, accommodation and cash assistance to refugees enables and prolongs an exceptional situation on Lesbos with devastating consequences not only for refugees but also for the lives of local populations. In that respect some of the humanitarian actors become part of the enduring exceptional border regime policies and can actually “do harm” (Anderson, 1999) to both refugees and locals.

1.4 An escalation of post-colonial features

One of my key research findings was that the enforcement of exceptional policies and the intervention of humanitarian and security actors generated a form of colonialism in Greece and Lesbos. I thus explored how colonialism is constructed through these various kinds of intervention. I argued that the “state of exception” in Greece during the past 10 years has

given space for an already established crypto-colonial context – mostly focusing on historical and cultural characteristics – to escalate and express itself through various ways including political, economic and discursive components. I also found that colonialism in Greece and Lesvos is not necessarily perpetrated by a single actor but is cultivated in much more disparate ways by multiple sovereignties. Moreover, the Greek state as well as internal elites have in many cases aligned with the enforcement of various EU exceptional policies and have reproduced colonial features. This stance of the Greek state has made Lesvos' populations frequently feel that they have been abandoned by law, or even “invaded”, not only by the EU and its intervening actors but also by the Greek state.

Despite the Greek state's alignment with various exceptional policies I showed that this is often a result of threats and coercion by the EU and a disregard for democratic legitimacy, public contest and debate. Also, through the imposition of enhanced surveillance and trusteeship the EU often treats the Greek state as an undeserving colonial subject which needs to be reformed and civilised. In this way, colonial discourses, such as Orientalism, Balkanism, Europeanisation and ethnocentrism are reproduced. Regarding the various intervening actors and their interactions with the Greek state, I found that many of these actors take control of the situation on Lesvos by frequently substituting and overruling the Greek administration, by imposing managerial models and inevitably producing discourses about their superiority.

On a local level I explored the various partnerships and interactions established between local and international intervening actors. Although these interactions imply a relation between equals and a break with colonial relations, I found that frequently unequal power relationships are being established. Many locals perceive these interventions as an external intrusion accompanied by discourses on intervening actors' superiority. Furthermore, various humanitarian actors often see Lesvos' populations as possessing specific characteristics, as being backward, exotic, or even racist. This stance reproduces power relations between the colonial power and the colonised. By also bringing new administrative and managerial models into the field the intervention on Lesvos has altered the values and practices that were part of locals' collective consciousness. Moreover, Lesvos as a space has brutally changed in the past five years due to the border regime policies and interventions. The transformation of Lesvos into a prison island, a militarised, securitised and humanitarian zone shows how spatial practices of humanitarian and surveillance actors invoke and reproduce colonial power relations. The securitisation and militarisation of Lesvos has been

normalised even in the eyes of a part of local population, who demand even more control and surveillance and, in many cases, themselves act as surveillance actors.

2. Contribution to Knowledge

The existing literature examining the refugee issue in Greece and Lesbos mainly focuses on refugees' human rights, reception, detention and criminalisation, on border politics and practices, and on solidarity towards refugees and forms of resistance. This work provides only a limited and indirect empirical and analytical focus on the perspectives of local populations who are affected by various border policies and interventions. I have argued throughout this thesis that although it is necessary and important to focus on refugees and border practices, a focus on those local populations who have intimate knowledge of the changes that have occurred, can help us gain a more in-depth understanding of the refugee crisis and the impacts of various policies and interventions.

As I demonstrated in the introductory chapter, the existing literature exploring the implications of the refugee crisis on Lesbos' local populations mainly concerns quantitative and documentary analysis of the impact of the refugee crisis on Lesbos' economy and the tourist industry, as well as on the Greek healthcare system (Pappas and Papatheodorou, 2017; e.g. Ivanov and Stavrinoudis, 2018; Kotsiou *et al.*, 2018; Panagos, Rontos and Nagopoulos, 2020). However, the quantitative methods being used in these studies do not provide a holistic understanding of the effects of the refugee crisis on local populations, and do not capture the voices and lived experiences of locals. Other issues being explored concerning locals on Lesbos focus on hospitality as a cultural mode, and more recently, there is a growing literature on the escalation of racism and xenophobia on Lesbos (Iliadou, 2019b; e.g. Fielitz, 2020; Papataxiarchis, 2020; Souzas *et al.*, 2020). Again, this research does not take into consideration the points of view of locals themselves.

Consequently, in this thesis I made a contribution to knowledge by changing the vantage point and carrying out a detailed analysis of how Lesbos' local community is affected by various border policies and interventions. My analysis also makes a contribution because I am applying this to Greece at this particular moment, where there is a 'crisis within a crisis', an issue which has not been researched in the past. Notions such as "crisis", "humanitarian intervention" and "permanent emergency" need to be conceptualised differently when we explore them through the lens of locals' perceptions and everyday lives. Focusing on Lesbos' local populations offers a new analytical lens when exploring the "refugee crisis". I thus

highlighted the perspective of locals to shed more light on the impact of certain interventions and to understand the nuances of different scales of governance and how different levels (international, national, local) interact. Apart from the above mentioned empirical and analytical contribution to knowledge this thesis also offered a range of theoretical contributions, as summed up below.

Agamben's argument that various populations can be abandoned by law and turned into "bare lives" (Agamben, 1998, p. 171), features prominently in refugee studies. I argued for the need to move beyond Agamben's theoretical understanding and empirically explore the different kinds of abandonment by law, which have different consequences for different populations. I thus argued that states of exception materialise differently in different places or for different populations and can generate multiple ways of abandonment by law. I thus showed that refugees on Lesbos do not experience the abandonment by law in the same ways that locals do. I have also moved beyond Agamben's understanding of the "state of exception", which suggests that the "state of exception" is imposed by a single sovereign actor, by exemplifying how sovereignty can be diffused and "a state of exception" can be imposed by diverse sovereign actors. On Lesbos there are multiple sovereignties at work producing an exceptional space and the border policies are formed through the assemblage of these actors, who create an effect that mirrors that of a single sovereign.

Furthermore, I deepened and enriched Herzfeld's (2002) notion of crypto-colonialism by connecting it more closely and embedding it more strongly in post-colonial literature. Although Herzfeld's concept of crypto-colonialism brought into focus Greece as a potential colonial space and inspired me to apply this perspective to Lesbos, my empirical findings indicated that a new type of colonialism is gradually emerging in Greece and Lesbos. I found that Herzfeld's concept – which draws attention to the covert dimension – needs to be supplemented and expanded by considering other post-colonial literatures and empirical realities in contemporary Greece and Lesbos.

3. Further observations and future directions of research

The refugee crisis and its aftermath that I am focusing on in this thesis is an evolving situation but the data I present has an end-point. Nevertheless, this does not mean that I have not been able to continue to observe this situation and be in the position to recommend how to further develop research in the research area. In the next four subsections I offer some further observations which could also serve as directions for future research.

3.1 Lesvos as the “laboratory of Europe”

Greece has already served as a space of experimentation in relation to border practices in the past. For example, the fence that was erected in 2012 at Greece’s northern border with Turkey (Leivada, 2015), in order to deter refugees from reaching Greece and Europe, served as an example and was applied by many countries who decided to close the “Balkan route” in 2016. The idea of Lesvos as the “laboratory of Europe” came through during my fieldwork, when I was invited to attend a conference on 06 October 2018, exploring the EU migration policy and its implications on borders. One of the presentations was given by a former colleague, and his main point was that “the EU-Turkey deal destroys thousands of refugees and destabilises Lesvos’ local community, by turning it into the laboratory of Europe”. The notion of the “laboratory” was repeated a few weeks later by Giorgos, an INGO representative, whom I interviewed. He argued that,

Lesvos has become the laboratory of Europe in terms of migration policies. The EU is aware of what is coming. If someone considers the unstable situation in Asian and African countries as well as the future consequences of climate change, migration flows will remain high or even increase. Especially countries which are buffer zones, in the periphery of the EU will mainly be in charge and I think Lesvos serves as a place of experimentation of what is coming.

The argument that specific areas can turn into spaces of experimentation was developed by anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff (2012). They argue that although privatisation, financialisation and exclusion processes are now common to every city on earth, they occurred more suddenly and rapidly in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In their view, it is Europe and America that are tending to evolve according to processes observed in Africa, and not the other way around, as is typically assumed (Ibid.). The above argument is also linked to research suggesting that colonies can serve as spaces of experimentation. For example, as Gouda (2000) explains, France’s colonial possessions functioned as an unbridled experimental space where French social engineers could measure and appraise the political efficacy of their ideological prescriptions for the organisation of French civil society and its infrastructure by means of trial-and-error methods. As France’s colonial administrator, Hubert-Gonzalve Lyauty, proclaimed in 1907, the French colonies constituted what the Far West is for America: an excellent testing ground for creating new energy,

rejuvenation, and fecundity (Ibid.). A variant of the above propositions is that “cities of the south” present a space of experimentation that prefigures the near future of the west (or north). Albahari (2015a, p. 15), notes that:

The southern outposts of immigration governance are central to liberal democratic practices of national and EU self-legitimation. They are also primary loci of state and EU spatialization, rather than spatial margins. Since the early 1990s they have functioned as improvised laboratories for the emerging regime of European surveillance, sovereign humanitarianism, military pushbacks and containment, and policy by charity.

Regarding the enforcement of the various border policies and strategies in Greece, Vasilis Papadopoulos (2017), the Greek former General Secretary of Migration had argued that:

There is an intention of the European Commission to use Greece and the management of the refugee crisis as a model in order to implement it in more spots in Europe and particularly in those countries which consist the central Mediterranean route, which is the main entrance to the EU.

By considering the above, Lesvos can serve as a characteristic case study in the EU to explore the consequences of border policies and interventions upon refugees and local communities, should they need to be implemented in other EU countries in the future. Voula, a local activist, argued that the EU-Turkey deal “serves as a kind of a pilot project for EU policy makers, in order to explore the socio-political consequences of exceptional policies that we could not even imagine before”. Savas, a public servant, argued that “Lesvos serves as a space of experimentation for the EU to try refugees’ and locals’ resistances and limits, because it is very likely that similar models of administration will be enforced in the future in other EU countries”. Ioanis, a radical activist, argued that, “the border policies are an experiment to see if locals can coexist with people in destitution. To have a refugee sleeping rough outside of your house and for you to be indifferent and see it as normal”.

By taking into consideration that at the time of writing there are millions of refugees stranded in Turkey alone, it is very likely that in the near future many of them will try to reach Europe

through Greece. In that respect exceptional border practices that have been tried and developed on Lesbos are likely to be enforced in other border areas of the EU.

3.2 Geopolitics and political dependence

The issue of geopolitics and Greece's dispute with Turkey was not one of my core research interests and this is the reason why it has not been discussed in the body of my thesis. Furthermore, this issue has existed long before the Greek crises, but during 2020 it is emerging more clearly. I thus suggest that it would be worthwhile to explore Greece's enduring dispute with Turkey as a backdrop to the refugee issue on Lesbos. During the last decades, this dispute has been mainly characterised by the overlapping claims between these two countries on energy exploration in the eastern Mediterranean, in areas that Greece regards as its exclusive economic zone. As I argue, this conflict establishes further relationships of dependence between Greece and the EU as well as the USA.

The conflict between Greece and Turkey has a long history and foreign countries have often intervened in order to prevent the escalation of this conflict. Greece seceded from the Ottoman Empire in 1830 and the Turkish Republic was founded after the Greek army was defeated in Asia Minor in 1922. The Treaty of Lausanne, signed in 1923 by the Allies of the First World War, set the borders of modern Turkey and has been the main text that has regulated Greek-Turkish relations since then (Gursoy, 2018). However, since the 1970s, eastern Mediterranean maritime boundary disputes and counterclaims between Greece and Turkey have frequently been intense. Turkey claims that Greece is trying to turn the Aegean Sea into a Greek lake, whereas Greece argues that Turkey violates Greek sovereignty (Ibid.). This enduring dispute has become a part of Greeks' everyday lives, and especially those living on some of the Greek islands. I can recall, for example, an incident that took place in March 1987, when all adults on Lesbos including my father and people I loved, were conscripted into the Greek army for several days. Everyone in the village on Lesbos where I was living were prepared for war between Greece and Turkey. During that period Turkey reacted when Greece decided to drill for oil in the Aegean Sea in the area of Thasos island, which is Greek but disputed by Turkey. In response, the Turkish navy sent survey ships to the area to conduct a survey with an escort of Turkish warships. This incident almost started a war between Greece and Turkey. Nine years later, in 1996, Greece and Turkey again came close to armed combat over the uninhabited islets of Imia/Kardak (Gursoy, 2018), where three Greek officers lost their lives. A conflict was avoided after the intervention of the American government, who the Greek prime minister publicly thanked during a speech in

the Greek parliament (Skai, 1996). In the following years it was a usual phenomenon for Greece to accuse Turkey of airspace violations and vice versa.

Over the past three years, this situation has gradually escalated. As Tanchum (2020) observes, the region's offshore natural gas resources have turned the Eastern Mediterranean into a key strategic arena through which larger geopolitical fault-lines involving the EU and the MENA region converge. In particular, Turkey and Greece have competing interests over gas reserves and they disagree over who has rights to key areas of the Eastern Mediterranean. In July 2020, Turkey put out a naval alert – known as a Navtex – and sent a research ship with an escort of Turkish warships to carry out a drilling survey in waters close to the Greek island of Kastellorizo (BBC, 2020c). After EU and mainly German intervention a conflict was avoided and there was a commitment to dialogue. However, at the time of writing, the situation is still in progress. The Greek government is seeking support from the EU and the USA and this implies that geopolitics in the Mediterranean establish further dependence relationships for Greece. In addition, the enduring conflict between Greece and Turkey also affects the Greek economy, which as I explained in my thesis is already fragile. In terms of defence expenditure as a share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP,) the top two spenders in NATO are the United States and Greece. Greece spends 2.24% and the US spends 3.42% of their GDP on defence (Allison, 2019). However, in a period of financial crisis, when Greece has enforced austerity measures and has made considerable reductions in sectors like education and public health, spending huge amounts of money on defence is questionable.

3.3 A state of emergency in the name of national security and public health

While writing the conclusion of this thesis, the enduring state of emergency on Lesbos escalated from an issue of security and public order into an issue of national security and public health. In particular, in September 2020 fires burning for three days completely destroyed the camp of Moria, leaving around 13,000 refugees, including 4,000 children, without shelter (BBC, 2020b). The Greek authorities claimed that the fires were deliberately caused by refugees after the camp was locked down for months due to COVID-19 (MacGregor, 2020). On 09 September 2020, the Greek prime minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, announced that what happened at Moria “cannot go on any longer, as it is also a matter of national security, public health and humanitarianism” (Ruptly, 2020). He thus announced that Lesbos will be in a state of emergency for the next four months and that all national resources would be made available to enforce this (Ibid.).

The Greek state's main priority was the prevention of the thousands of homeless refugees' access to Mytilene and the villages around Moria camp, not only for public order reasons but also in order to avoid further spread of COVID-19. This led to further repression, since police blockades were deployed for days near Moria and the area around Mytilene. Furthermore, local far-right groups have been reported to be attacking refugees and shouting at refugees "Burn them alive! Shoot them" (Exadaktylos and Iliadou, 2020). In order to manage the thousands of refugees who were left homeless the Greek army together with the UNHCR established within a few days a new camp at the island's "Kara Tepe" army firing range, also including private land around this area. This camp is situated close to the "Kara-Tepe" reception facility, which as I explained is managed by Lesvos municipality, and approximately two kilometres away from Moria village and Mytilene and a few hundred meters away from the village of Panagiouda.

The Greek Prime Minister, after meeting with the European Commission's vice-president announced that the new camp will be jointly managed by the Greek state and the European Commission (Presse, 2020). He also announced that none of the refugees on Lesvos would be allowed to move to the Greek mainland, apart from 400 unaccompanied minors (Ibid.). He thus made clear that the geographical restriction of refugees' movement is in effect. Even though the Greek government announced that this new reception facility would be temporary it appears that this is not the case. With two decisions on September 14, the Greek Ministry for Migration and Asylum secured the amount for the lease of land plots at Kara-Tepe until 2025 (Keep Talking Greece, 2020). Moreover, at the time of writing, discussions are taking place among the Greek Prime Minister, the European Commission President and German Chancellor on ways to cooperate with the European Union for the creation of a new, permanent and closed refugee camp on Lesvos (ekathimerini, 2020).

In that respect, in the name of national security and public health the state of exception on Lesvos has been prolonged for the upcoming years. The establishment of the new reception facility at Kara-Tepe can be described again as a state of exception and a direct violation the rule of law. In particular, the area where the new camp is established is an archaeological site and any excavating operation is prohibited. Ten years ago there were plans for a new port to be established in this area, but the Greek archaeological department did not allow any kind of intervention to take place (Balaskas, 2020a). The establishment of this new camp also violates environmental law, because the area at Kara-Tepe is a fragile and vulnerable ecosystem that deserves special protection and any kind of human intervention and

excavating process is prohibited. Specifically, the seashore and riparian zone surrounding the new camp are considered as essential elements of the natural environment and they are protected constitutionally (art. 24 of the Greek Constitution). Local authorities also argued that it is unacceptable for a camp to be established in a military area of great national defence significance. While writing this section locals' protests against the establishment of this new camp are ongoing (BBC News, 2010; Balaskas, 2020a) and their concerns need to be further researched.

3.4. The need for comparative research

While the focus of my thesis was on Lesbos, future comparative research on other places and local communities affected by exceptional border policies and interventions could provide useful insights. I would thus suggest that further work can be done on different geographical areas including other Greek regions, as well as various European and non-European countries, where local communities confront states of exception as a result of border policies and interventions.

In particular, in addition to Lesbos there are thirty-four other reception facilities in Greece, with twenty-seven of these on the Greek mainland and seven on other Greek islands (UNHCR, 2018a). Over the past three years it has been a common phenomenon to see in the Greek media local communities reacting to the establishment of reception facilities in their regions and frequently saying that, "we do not want to become like Lesbos". Especially the islands of Chios and Samos have turned – in a similar way to Lesbos – into open prisons for refugees and the concerns expressed by locals on these islands are comparable to the concerns of locals on Lesbos. The escalation of racism and xenophobia as well as the destabilisation of these local communities are also quite profound, and it would be interesting to connect these case studies with that of Lesbos to identify similarities and differences.

Moreover, apart from Greece there are other Mediterranean countries, as well as countries of the "Balkan route" or northern and western European countries – which are the final destination of refugees' journeys – that systematically enforce exceptional border policies. Comparative research regarding Greece and other European countries – or specific regions of these countries like for instance Calais or Dover where local communities are affected by the border regime policies – could provide interesting insights into the consequences of the

border regime on these communities, as well as interpretations regarding the reasons for the escalation of racism and xenophobia in Europe.

Finally, as I suggested in the introduction of this thesis, the silence on the local populations on Lesbos needs to be understood in the context of a more general structural silence in humanitarian and development literature on various non-European regions. Even though there are many studies that indicate the importance of understanding local perceptions on externally introduced policies and interventions they also fail to document them (for example see: Bos, 2003, p. 25; Frangonikolopoulos, 2005, p. 62; Minn, 2007; Okumu, 2003). Thus, a focus on counties like for example Jordan, Turkey and Libya – that host disproportionately large numbers of refugees – could provide insights in understanding the legitimacy and effectiveness of border policies and humanitarian/ security interventions. Interlinking case studies on external interventions and local community-refugee interactions in non-European counties/ regions with the experiences of local communities of Greece/ Lesbos would help to asses in a more holistic way the consequences of various interventions and bordering practices on whole countries or regions.

4. Structural changes and collective agency

As I explained in the introduction to my thesis, my research employed reflections on individual experiences as material to exploring wider structural issues (Minh-Ha, 1991; de Jong, 2017, p. 5) of power, post-colonialism, permanent emergencies, humanitarian and security interventions. It thus worked with the assumption that these micro experiences can tell us something meaningful about developments at the macro level. However, studying these individual voices and concerns does not mean that potential solutions are simply lying at a micro level of people's subjectivities, because there are structural changes required.

A broad structural issue to briefly discuss relates to the demand for open borders and safe passages. This demand has been articulated for several years by activist networks, which have identified that the underlying problem is the closed border and the securitised border regime. If there were safe passages for refugees or even no borders, then refugees would have the opportunity to choose the country of their destination. They would not have to remain stranded in border areas that are transformed into open prisons and buffer zones, with all of the negative implications that this transformation has for both refugees and local communities. Although for many a structural change of this kind might sound utopian, my own understanding is that borders are a social construction and that every social construction

can change. Alternatively, a proportional allocation of refugees within the EU, by taking into account each country's capacity, would also be beneficial for both refugees and locals from disproportionately affected regions.

Second, considering locals' experiences and perceptions is of immense importance. As I explained, locals frequently feel that their voices and concerns are overlooked. There is a need for the EU, the Greek state and international actors to engage in productive conversations with local populations on the consequences of the border regime policies on their everyday lives. Such debates and meetings should take place in simultaneous translation and not exclusively in English. The perceptions of locals regarding externally introduced humanitarian and security action is an issue that matters because "target populations and other local stakeholders are not just passive recipients; rather, they mediate and act. Their influence is key to understanding the legitimacy and effectiveness of a various interventions" (Dijkzeul and Wakenge, 2010). Furthermore, considering local perceptions can show respect for local populations and also improve the effectiveness and accountability of the humanitarian sector. As I showed in my thesis, many of the IOs and (I)NGOs on Lesbos are primarily accountable to their donors rather than local authorities, local populations or refugees. Consequently, those in power have the capacity to act without regard for those whose lives are affected by those actions (Papadopoulos, 2010). In that respect, local populations are treated as "excluded forms of life", in Agamben's terms, since their political and social existence is being ignored. Increased accountability, debates and productive conversations with those populations whose lives are directly affected by exceptional policies would be a sign of respect to democratic procedures and local populations who frequently feel as if they are being invaded or colonised. Furthermore, as many local stakeholders and activists highlighted during our interviews, they have a long-term experience with the refugee issue on Lesbos and first-hand experience of how things work locally. They are thus in the position to make proposals and provide alternative and better suggestions for liveable ways forward.

Moreover, in light of the high rates of unemployment in Greece, international working staff in the field could be gradually replaced by local staff. This recommendation echoes the observation of a director of a German INGO that has had a presence on Lesbos since 2007, who commented, "I disagree with the logic that there is a need of international actors' intervention on Lesbos. Greece has a surplus of experienced and highly skilled working staff and should take advantage of these people who know much better than external actors how

things work locally”. A development like that would also mean that locals would not feel as if they were colonised by external actors, who supervise them and dictate ways of doing things.

For the above-mentioned structural changes to take place agency should also become more united. Locals who have been divided should focus on what unites them and not on what divides them. They should act collectively, together with refugees, in order to defy exceptional policies such as the geographical restriction of refugees’ movement, which has negative consequences for the lives of both refugees and locals. (I)NGOs that focus on the provision of necessities should stop silencing injustices that the border regime produces and allow their staff to raise their political voices and engage in collective political activism. When refugees, locals and humanitarian actors act collectively there is an increased chance for positive structural change to take place.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Invitation letters to participants

International Organisations

Dear Madam/Sir,

My name is Dimos Sarantidis and I am a doctoral researcher at the Open University (UK), department of Development, Policy and Practice (<http://www.open.ac.uk/people/ds25563>).

In my research I am exploring the interactions between the international organisations/agencies, which work on Lesbos/ Greece in the aftermath of the recent ‘refugee crisis’, and the local populations of Lesbos Island (local authorities, local networks and professional associations). For further details concerning my research please find attached an information leaflet and a publicity leaflet.

In this respect, I would like to kindly ask you if you could give me a face-to-face interview for approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour in Mytilene between 04 September and 14 November 2018. In case it is more convenient to you, we could instead arrange a Skype interview.

I would really appreciate if you could positively respond to my request. Thank you in advance.

Yours Sincerely,

Dimos Sarantidis

Lesvos' local populations (Greek translation)

|Αξιότιμη κυρία/ Αξιότιμε κύριε,

Ονομάζομαι Δήμος Σαραντίδης (<http://www.open.ac.uk/people/ds25563>) και διεξάγω έρευνα στην Λέσβο, ως μέρος της διδακτορικής μου διατριβής στο Ανοιχτό Πανεπιστήμιο του Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου στο τμήμα 'Development Policy and Practice'.

Σκοπός της έρευνας είναι να μελετήσω τις αλληλεπιδράσεις μεταξύ των διεθνών οργανώσεων, που λειτουργούν στη Λέσβο κατά τη διάρκεια της «προσφυγικής κρίσης», και των τοπικών πληθυσμών της Λέσβου (τοπικές αρχές, τοπικά δίκτυα και επαγγελματίες). Για περισσότερες λεπτομέρειες επισυνάπτω δύο σχετικά έγγραφα.

Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη ότι η Υπηρεσία σας είναι αρμόδια για τον συντονισμό, την καταγραφή και την αξιολόγηση των Μη Κυβερνητικών Οργανώσεων (ΜΚΟ) στη Λέσβο θα επιθυμούσα να διεξάγω κάποια πρόσωπο με πρόσωπο συνέντευξη, διάρκειας 30 λεπτών έως 1 ώρας περίπου, με κάποιο από τα στελέχη της Υπηρεσίας σας. Θα διαμένω στην Μυτιλήνη από 3 Σεπτεμβρίου έως και 14 Νοεμβρίου 2018 και θα εκτιμούσα ιδιαίτερος εάν θα μπορούσαμε να προγραμματίσουμε μία συνάντηση κατά την περίοδο αυτή.

Σας ευχαριστώ εκ των προτέρων.

Με εκτίμηση,

Δήμος Σαραντίδης

Appendix 2: Information sheets

International Organisations



Dimos Sarantis
Email: dimos.sarantis@open.ac.uk
The Open University
Walton Hall,
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA

Information Sheet for International Organisations

"The 'refugee crisis' and the relations between international humanitarian organisations and local populations on Lesbos Island"

My name is Dimos Sarantis (see: <http://www.open.ac.uk/people/ds25563>) and I am conducting a study as part of my PhD research at the Development Policy and Practice department of the Open University. Please find below information concerning my research and what it involves. If there is something that you do not understand, please feel free to ask me at any time.

What is the aim of this research?

I aim to explore the interactions between the international organisations/agencies, which have intervened on Lesbos in the aftermath of the recent 'refugee crisis', and the local populations of Lesbos Island (local authorities, local networks and professional associations).

Why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been identified as one of the main international organisations/agencies, which operate on Lesbos in the aftermath of the 'refugee crisis' and for this reason you have been invited to participate in this research.

Do I have to take part?

No, your participation in this research is voluntary. Thus, you have the right to refuse to participate in case you do not want to, or even to withdraw until the point of transcription and publication.

What happens if I change my mind before, during and after the interview?

In case you change your mind you are free to withdraw and leave at any time without any further explanation. You can request all the information you shared with me not to be used and also to be destroyed until July 2019. After that date all information (data) will be anonymised and transcribed.

What will happen during the interview?

- 1) I will ask you to complete a consent form and sign it. In case you do not want to sign it, I will ask you to record your verbal consent.
- 2) I will ask you to participate in a face-to-face interview with me, during which I will ask you general and open ended questions about the nature of your work and your experiences as a professional concerning your interaction with local authorities, local networks/NGOs and more broadly local populations of Lesbos Island. The interview should last around one hour and will take place at an agreed site, date and time that is convenient to you. You do not have to answer questions and discuss issues you are not comfortable with.
- 3) The interview will be recorded by Dictaphone, unless you request otherwise, in which case I will take hand written notes.

Is it confidential?

Your participation will be treated in strict confidence and I will keep safe all the information from our discussion, while your name, identity, personal information, and other information you share with me will be anonymised. That means that your name and other people's names you share with me will be changed and no other people will be able to identify who you are. I will also write a report of the findings from this study, but no individual will be identifiable in published results of the research.

What happens now?

The information you give me will be encrypted and safely stored. It will be destroyed five years after my research finishes. No one will have access to your information except me. The findings of my research will only be used for research purposes and may be published in academic/scientific journals and

1

reports. Your personal information will be anonymised and thus no one will be able to identify who you are and that you have participated in my research.

What if I have other questions?

If you have any other questions about this research, I would be very happy to answer them. Please contact me on: dimos.sarantis@open.ac.uk

In case you want to contact someone else at the Open University concerning the research or the researcher, you can contact my main supervisor, Professor Giles Mohan:

Email: giles.mohan@open.ac.uk
Tel: (+44) 01908 653654

Address:
Professor Giles Mohan
Development Policy & Practice Group,
The Open University,
Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK
WWW: <http://dpp.open.ac.uk/people/giles-mohan>

Lesvos' local populations (including Greek translation)



Dimos Sarantidis
Email: dimos.sarantidis@open.ac.uk
The Open University
Walton Hall,
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA

Information Sheet for Lesvos' Local Populations

"The 'refugee crisis' and the relations between international humanitarian organisations and local populations on Lesvos Island"

My name is Dimos Sarantidis (see: <http://www.open.ac.uk/people/ds25563>) and I am conducting a study as part of my PhD thesis at the Development Policy and Practice Department of the Open University. Please find below information concerning my research and what it involves. If there is something that you do not understand, please feel free to ask me at any time.

What is the aim of this research?

I aim to explore the interactions and power relations between the international organisations/agencies, which have intervened on Lesvos in the aftermath of the recent 'refugee crisis', and the local populations of Lesvos Island. An aim is to also understand why this intervention has been taking place, in a developed European country, under what circumstances, terms and conditions.

Why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been identified as a key member of Lesvos Island's local populations that this research is focusing on (local authorities, local civil society local private sector), and for this reason you have been invited to participate in this research.

Do I have to take part?

No, your participation on this research is voluntary. Thus, you have the right to refuse to participate in case you do not want to, and withdraw up until the point of transcription and publication.

What happens if I change my mind before, during and after the interview?

In case you change your mind you are free to withdraw and leave at any time without any further explanation. You can request all the information you shared with me not to be used and also destroyed until July 2019. After that date all information (data) will be anonymised and transcribed.

What will happen during the interview?

- 1) I will ask you to complete a consent form and sign it. In case you do not want to sign it, I will ask you to record your verbal consent.
- 2) I will ask you to participate in a face-to-face interview with me, during which I will ask you general and open ended questions on your experiences and perceptions concerning the emergency intervention and settlement of various international actors on Lesvos. The interview should last around one hour and will take place at an agreed site, date and time that is convenient to you. You do not have to answer questions and discuss something in case you are not comfortable with.
- 3) The interview will be recorded by Dictaphone, unless you request otherwise, in which case I will take hand written notes.

Is it confidential?

Your participation will be treated in strict confidence and I will keep safe all the information from our discussion, while your name, identity, personal information, and other information you share with me will be anonymised. That means that your name and other people's names you share with me will be changed and no other people will be able to identify who you are. I will also write a report of the findings from this study, but no individual will be identifiable in published results of the research.

What happens now?

The information you give me will be encrypted, safely stored and destroyed five years after my research finishes. No one will have access to your information except me. The findings of my research will only be

04/2013

used for research purposes and may be published in academic/scientific journals and reports. Your personal information will be anonymised and thus no one will be able to identify who you are and that you have participated in my research.

What if I have other questions?

If you have any other questions about this research I would be very happy to answer them. Please contact Dimos Sarantidis on: dimos.sarantidis@open.ac.uk

In case you want to contact someone else at the Open University concerning the research or the researcher, you can contact my main supervisor, Professor Giles Mohan:

Email: giles.mohan@open.ac.uk
Tel: (+44) 01908 653654

Address:
Professor Giles Mohan
Development Policy & Practice Group,
The Open University,
Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK
WWW: <http://dpp.open.ac.uk/people/giles-mohan>

Ενημερωτική φόρμα για τους τοπικούς πληθυσμούς στη Λέσβο**Η «προσωπική κρίση» και οι σχέσεις μεταξύ των διεθνών οργανώσεων και των τοπικών πληθυσμών στο νησί της Λέσβου**

Ονομάζομαι Δήμος Σαραντίδης (ΔΑ.: <http://www.open.ac.uk/record/ids25553>) και διεξάγω έρευνα ως μέρος της διδακτορικής μου διατριβής στο Ανοικτό Πανεπιστήμιο του Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου στο τμήμα 'Development Policy and Practice'. Παρακάτω μπορείτε να βρείτε πληροφορίες για την έρευνά μου και το αντικείμενό της. Αν κάτι από τα παρακάτω δεν είναι κατανοητό, μπορείτε να με ρωτήσετε προκειμένου να σας το εξηγήσω.

Ποιος είναι ο σκοπός της έρευνας;

Σκοπός μου είναι να διερευνήσω τις αλληλεπιδράσεις και τις σχέσεις ισχύος μεταξύ των διεθνών οργανώσεων, που έχουν παρέμβει και εγκατασταθεί στη Λέσβο κατά τη διάρκεια και μετά από την «προσωπική κρίση», και των τοπικών πληθυσμών της Λέσβου. Ένας επιπλέον σκοπός είναι να κατανοήσω γιατί μία τέτοια παρέμβαση λαμβάνει χώρα σε μία αναπτυσσόμενη ευρωπαϊκή χώρα, κάτω από ποιες συνθήκες, όρους και καταστάσεις.

Για ποιο λόγο έχω προσκληθεί να συμμετέχω σε αυτή την έρευνα;

Έχετε προσκληθεί να συμμετέχετε στην έρευνα ως ένα βασικό μέλος των υπό διερεύνηση τοπικών πληθυσμών της Λέσβου (τοπικές αρχές, κοινωνία των πολιτών, ιδιωτικός τομέας).

Είναι υποχρεωτικό να συμμετέχω;

Όχι, η συμμετοχή σας είναι εθελοντική. Έχετε το δικαίωμα να αρνηθείτε ή ακόμη και να αποσυρθείτε τη συμμετοχή σας από την περίοδο μετά τη συνέντευξη έως και την λήξη της απομνημονεύσεως της συνέντευξης.

Τι θα συμβεί αν αλλάξω γνώμη πριν, κατά τη διάρκεια και μετά τη συνέντευξη;

Στην περίπτωση αυτή μπορείτε να αποσυρθείτε τη συμμετοχή σας, χωρίς να χρειασθεί να δώσετε οποιαδήποτε περαιτέρω εξήγηση. Μπορείτε, μέχρι και τον Ιούλιο του 2019, να ζητήσετε όλες οι πληροφορίες που μοιραστήκατε μαζί μου να μην χρησιμοποιηθούν και να καταστραφούν/διαγραφούν. Μετά την παραπάνω ημερομηνία όλες οι πληροφορίες θα απομνημονεύονται.

Τι θα συμβεί κατά τη διάρκεια της συνέντευξης;

1) Θα σας ζητήσω να συμπληρώσετε μία φόρμα συναίνεσης και να την υπογράψετε. Στην περίπτωση που δεν επιθυμείτε να υπογράψετε, θα σας ζητήσω να συναινέσετε προφορικά.
2) Θα σας ζητήσω να συμμετέχετε σε μία πρόσωπο με πρόσωπο συνέντευξη μαζί μου, κατά τη διάρκεια της οποίας θα σας θέσω ερωτήματα σχετικά με την ανθρωπιστική επέμβαση διεθνών οργανώσεων στη Λέσβο. Η συνέντευξη θα διαρκέσει περίπου μία ώρα, θα διεξαχθεί σε προκαθορισμένο τόπο και χρόνο που θα συμφωνήσουμε και θα σας εξυπηρετεί με τον καλύτερο δυνατό τρόπο. Δεν χρειάζεται να απαντήσετε ερωτήσεις σε περίπτωση που δεν το επιθυμείτε.
3) Η συνέντευξη θα ηχογραφηθεί εκτός και αν δεν το επιθυμείτε. Στην περίπτωση αυτή θα κρατήσω γραπτές σημειώσεις.

Υπάρχει εχεμύθεια;

Η συνέντευξή σας θα αντιμετωπιστεί με αυστηρή εχεμύθεια και όλες οι πληροφορίες από την συζήτησή μας θα είναι απόλυτα εμπιστευτικές. Το όνομά σας, τα προσωπικά σας στοιχεία και ονόματα άλλων που πιθανόν θα μοιραστείτε μαζί μου θα αλλάζουν και θα χρησιμοποιηθούν ψευδώνυμα και κανένας δεν θα μπορεί να αναγνωρίσει την ταυτότητά σας. Συνεπώς, στις οποιαδήποτε μελλοντικές δημοσιεύσεις μου στο μέλλον (επιστημονικά άρθρα ή αναφορές) κανένα φυσικό πρόσωπο δεν θα είναι αναγνωρίσιμο από κανέναν.

04/2013

Τι θα συμβεί μετά τη συνέντευξη;

Οι πληροφορίες που θα μου δώσετε θα αποκρυπτογραφηθούν, θα αποθηκευθούν με ασφάλεια και θα διαγραφούν πέντε χρόνια μετά το τέλος της έρευνας. Δεν θα έχει κανένας άλλος πρόσβαση στις πληροφορίες αυτές, εκτός από εμένα. Τα ευρήματα της έρευνας θα χρησιμοποιηθούν αποκλειστικά για ερευνητικούς σκοπούς και ίσως δημοσιευθούν σε επιστημονικά περιοδικά. Η συνέντευξη είναι ανώνυμη και συνεπώς κανείς δεν θα μπορεί να αναγνωρίσει την ταυτότητά σας και ότι συμμετείχατε στην έρευνά μου.

Εάν έχω περαιτέρω ερωτήσεις;

Εάν έχετε περαιτέρω ερωτήσεις σχετικά με την παρούσα έρευνα θα χαίρομαι να τις απαντήσω.

Παρακαλώ επικοινωνήστε με μαζί μου στην παρακάτω ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση:

dimos.sarantidis@open.ac.uk

Στην περίπτωση που επιθυμείτε να έρθετε σε επαφή με κάποιον από το Ανοικτό Πανεπιστήμιο σχετικά με την παρούσα έρευνα και τον ερευνητή, μπορείτε να επικοινωνήσετε με τον κύριο επιβλέποντά μου, τον καθηγητή Giles Mohan:

Email: giles.mohan@open.ac.uk

Τηλ.: (+44) 01908 653654

Διεύθυνση:

Professor Giles Mohan
Development Policy & Practice Group,
The Open University,
Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK
WWW: <http://dpp.open.ac.uk/people/giles-mohan>

Appendix 3: Publicity leaflets (including Greek translation)



The 'refugee crisis' and the relations between international humanitarian organisations and local populations on Lesbos Island

Background and aims

This research project concerns the humanitarian intervention and settlement of various international organisations in Greece, due to the so-called "refugee crisis". Its aim is to explore the relations between these international organisations and the local populations of Lesbos Island. An aim of this research is to also understand why this intervention has been taking place in a developed European country, under what circumstances, terms and conditions.



http://www.wondergreece.gr/v1/en/Regions/Lesvos/About_region/Main_cities_villages/15245-Mvtilene

Methodology

The aims of my thesis will be investigated by doing documentary analysis, observation and qualitative interviews with the international organisations and Lesbos' local populations.

Impact

I will communicate my research by publishing journal articles, presenting my research findings in conferences and public debates and by using social media.

Funding and duration

This is a 3 year PhD project, that started on 1st October 2017, and is funded by The Open University.

Contact

For further information, please contact:

Dimos Sarantidis
Development Policy & Practice,
The Open University,
Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK
Email: dimos.sarantidis@open.ac.uk
WWW: <http://www.open.ac.uk/people/ds25563>

Prof. Giles Mohan (supervisor)
Development Policy & Practice Group,
The Open University,
Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK
Email: giles.mohan@open.ac.uk
Tel: (+44) 01908 653654
WWW: <http://dpp.open.ac.uk/people/giles-mohan>

Η «προσφυγική κρίση» και οι σχέσεις μεταξύ των διεθνών οργανώσεων και των τοπικών πληθυσμών στο νησί της Λέσβου

Σκοπός της έρευνας

Η παρούσα έρευνα αφορά στην ανθρωπιστική παρέμβαση και στην εγκατάσταση διεθνών οργανώσεων στην Ελλάδα, ως συνέπεια της 'προσφυγικής κρίσης'. Σκοπός είναι να διερευνηθούν οι σχέσεις μεταξύ των διεθνών οργανώσεων και των τοπικών πληθυσμών της Λέσβου. Σκοπός επίσης είναι να διερευνηθούν οι λόγοι για τους οποίους μια τέτοια παρέμβαση λαμβάνει χώρα σε μία αναπτυσσόμενη Ευρωπαϊκή χώρα, υπό ποιες συνθήκες, όρους και καταστάσεις.



http://www.wondergreece.gr/v1/en/Regions/Lesvos/About_region/Main_cities_villages/15245-Mytilene

Η προσφυγική κρίση, έως και σήμερα, έχει κυρίως προσεγγιστεί εστιάζοντας στους πρόσφυγες και στις πολιτικές σχετικά με την μετανάστευση και τα σύνορα. Η κύρια συνεισφορά της παρούσας έρευνας είναι ότι εστιάζει στο τοπικό επίπεδο και στις αλληλεπιδράσεις της τοπικής κοινωνίας με τις διεθνείς οργανώσεις. Η έννοια της 'κρίσης' είναι πολυεπίπεδη και χρειάζεται να προσεγγιστεί αναλύοντας τις διαφορετικές της διαστάσεις και τις σχέσεις μεταξύ διαφορετικών παραγόντων.

Μεθοδολογία

Θα διεξαγω έρευνα κάνοντας ανάλυση κειμένων, παρατήρηση και ημιδομημένες συνεντεύξεις με διεθνείς οργανώσεις και τοπικούς πληθυσμούς στο νησί της Λέσβου.

Συμβολή

Τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας θα δημοσιευθούν σε επιστημονικά περιοδικά, θα παρουσιασθούν σε επιστημονικά συνέδρια και δημόσιες συζητήσεις, καθώς επίσης και σε μέσα κοινωνικής δικτύωσης.

Χρηματοδότηση και διάρκεια της έρευνας

Η παρούσα έρευνα είναι διάρκειας 3 ετών, ξεκίνησε τον Οκτώβριο του 2017 και χρηματοδοτείται από το Ανοιχτό Πανεπιστήμιο.

Επαφές

Για περισσότερες πληροφορίες μπορείτε να επικοινωνήσετε με τους παρακάτω:

Δήμος Σαραντιδής
Development Policy & Practice,
The Open University,
Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK
Email: dimos.sarantidis@open.ac.uk
WWW: <http://www.open.ac.uk/people/ds25563>

Prof. Giles Mohan (επιβλέπων καθηγητής)
Development Policy & Practice Group,
The Open University,
Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK
Email: giles.mohan@open.ac.uk
Tel: (+44) 01908 653654
WWW: <http://dpp.open.ac.uk/people/giles-mohan>

Appendix 4: Consent forms (including Greek translation)



Development Policy & Practice – Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Consent form

"The 'refugee crisis' and the relations between international humanitarian organisations and local populations on Lesbos Island"

Name of participant:

Name of principal investigator(s): Dimos Sarantidis

1. I consent to participate in this project, the details of which have been explained to me, and I have been provided with a written statement in plain language to keep.
2. I understand that my participation will involve taking part in an interview and I agree that the researcher may use the results as described in the plain language statement.
3. I acknowledge that:
 - a. the possible effects of participating in this research have been explained to my satisfaction
 - b. I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided
 - c. the project is for the purpose of research
 - d. I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements
 - e. I have been informed that with my consent the data generated will be stored on the researcher's computer and will be destroyed 5 years after the completion of the research
 - f. Any personal data will be referred to by a pseudonym in any publications arising from the research

I consent to this interview being audio-taped

☐ yes ☐ no
(please tick)

I am happy for the name of my organisation to be used

☐ yes ☐ no
(Please tick if applicable)

I wish to receive a copy of the summary project report on research findings

☐ yes ☐ no
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Participant signature:

Date:

Dimos Sarantidis, e-mail: dimos.sarantidis@open.ac.uk, The Open University, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Development, Policy & Practice, UK

This research has been reviewed by, and received a favourable opinion, from the OU Human Research Ethics Committee - HREC reference number: HREC/2860/Sarantidis (<http://www.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/>).

HREC

<http://www.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/human-research>

Φόρμα Συναίνεσης

Η «προσφυγική κρίση» και οι σχέσεις μεταξύ των διεθνών οργανώσεων και των τοπικών πληθυσμών στο νησί της Λέσβου

Όνομα συμμετέχοντα:

Όνομα ερευνητή: Δήμος Σαραντίδης

1. Συναίνω να συμμετέχω στην παρούσα έρευνα, οι λεπτομέρειες της οποίας μου έχουν εξηγηθεί σε γλώσσα κατανοητή τόσο προφορικά, όσο και γραπτώς μέσω του ενημερωτικής φόρμας που έλαβα.
2. Κατανοώ ότι η συμμετοχή μου στην έρευνα αφορά στη διαξαγωγή μίας συνέντευξης και συμφωνώ ότι ο ερευνητής μπορεί να χρησιμοποιήσει τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας με τρόπο όπως αυτός περιγράφεται στην ενημερωτική φόρμα.
3. Αναγνωρίζω ότι:
 - α. Οι πιθανές συνέπειες σε ό,τι αφορά στη συμμετοχή μου στην έρευνα αυτή μου έχουν πλήρως εξηγηθεί
 - β. Έχω ενημερωθεί ότι μπορώ να αποσυρθώ από την έρευνα χωρίς οποιαδήποτε περαιτέρω επεξήγηση και να ζητήσω να διαγραφούν οποιαδήποτε δεδομένα αφορούν στη συνέντευξή μου, πριν ξεκινήσει η επεξεργασία αυτών
 - γ. Η παρούσα μελέτη γίνεται για ερευνητικούς σκοπούς
 - δ. Έχω ενημερωθεί ότι τα ευρήματα της έρευνας θα προστατευθούν με κάθε μέσο, όπως ο νόμος ορίζει.
 - ε. Έχω ενημερωθεί ότι με τη συναίνεσή μου οι πληροφορίες που θα προκύψουν από την συνέντευξη θα αποθηκευθούν ηλεκτρονικά στον ηλεκτρονικό υπολογιστή του ερευνητή και θα διαγραφούν πέντε έτη μετά από την ολοκλήρωση της έρευνας.
 - στ. Θα χρησιμοποιηθούν ψευδώνυμα σε οποιαδήποτε μελλοντικές δημοσιεύσεις που θα σχετίζονται με την παρούσα έρευνα.

Συναίνω να ηχογραφηθεί αυτή η συνέντευξη ☐ Ναι ☐ Όχι
Συναίνω να γίνει αναφορά στην οργάνωση για την οποία εργάζομαι ☐ Ναι ☐ Όχι
(Επιλέξτε εάν σας αφορά)
Επιθυμώ να λάβω αντίγραφο περίληψης των αποτελεσμάτων της έρευνας ☐ Ναι ☐ Όχι

Email ή ταχυδρομική διεύθυνση που μπορεί να αποσταλεί η παραπάνω περίληψη:

Υπογραφή συμμετέχοντα:

Ημερομηνία:

Dimos Sarantis, e-mail: dimos.sarantis@open.ac.uk, The Open University, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Development, Policy & Practice, UK

Η έρευνα αυτή έχει εγκριθεί από την αρμόδια επιτροπή του Ανοιχτού Πανεπιστημίου (OU Human Research Ethics Committee) με αριθμό πρωτ.: HREC/2860/Sarantis (http://www.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/).

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